

# THE MONTH

OCTOBER 1949

ENGLISH PAINTING  
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Geoffrey Ashe

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— LONGMANS —

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HERE is a good opportunity to mention three "period" publications of The Unicorn Press: George du Maurier's *TRILBY* (10s. 6d.), a facsimile reprint of the first illustrated edition of 1895, with the author's delightful pictures in the text; *AUBREY BEARDSLEY* (10s.), Arthur Symonds' biographical and critical essay, with sixteen plates, written immediately after the artist's death; and finally, *THE POEMS OF ERNEST DOWSON* (6s.). It is curious how few people spotted that the title of Margaret Mitchell's portentously long novel, "Gone with the Wind," is taken from Dowson's poem, "Non Sum qualis Eram."

This news-letter is issued by The Richards Press Ltd. and The Unicorn Press, whose address is No. 8 Charles II Street, St. James's Square, London, S.W.1, WHI 4239.

# THE MONTH

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OCTOBER 1949

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## NOTES ON NEW CONTRIBUTORS

FRANCIS KING has written *An Air that Kills*, and other novels.

WILFRID MELLERS is author of *Studies in Contemporary Music*, etc.

W. A. M. PETERS is a Jesuit priest of the Dutch Province and is well known for his recent *Gerard Manley Hopkins, A Critical Essay towards the Understanding of his Poetry*.

D. J. ENRIGHT is Professor of English at Alexandria University: his *Commentary on Faust* and *Season-Ticket* (poems) were published earlier this year.

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LONGMANS

# ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By  
JOHN ROTHENSTEIN

## I

IT IS UNLIKELY, it is hardly indeed imaginable, that the twentieth century will be accounted one of the great periods of painting. Yet painting in our time shows certain characteristics of surpassing interest. The enfeeblement of traditional authorities has encouraged an unequalled diversity in all the arts—a diversity which has been stimulated by a variety of accessible examples of the arts of every time and place inconceivable in any previous age.

An artist working today has to accommodate himself to circumstances unlike any which have previously existed. A few prints of paintings by Michaelangelo were sufficient to produce an intense and lasting impression upon the imagination of Blake; and I remember hearing someone describe the delighted agitation of Morris and Burne-Jones when, as undergraduates at Oxford, they happened to see a small coloured reproduction of a painting by Botticelli. How almost infinitely greater are the opportunities of the artist of today for acquiring knowledge! With what little effort can a provincial art student gather an impression of the sculpture of, say, the ancient Etruscans or of the Minoans, or of the present wall painting of the Mexicans! I am far from being persuaded that the advantage of easy access to the art of other ages and peoples—it can give to the student such an unprecedented breadth of critical experience and to the lonely original artist precisely the examples he needs to justify and enrich his own vision—outweighs its disadvantages. Reproductions which in time past

<sup>1</sup> Introductory chapter of a book in preparation, published by kind permission of Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode.



would have germinated new movements are now apt to be accepted as a matter of course and regarded with listless eyes. Even the most sensitive cannot respond to more than a relatively few reproductions any more than the most compassionate to more than a relatively few of the atrocious crimes against humanity of the prevalence of which we are aware. Indeed the vast multiplicity of the art forms by which the painter of today can hardly avoid being affected disposes him against the intensive and therefore fruitful exploitation of the possibilities of a limited range of art forms, and tends to overwhelm his imagination and to prevent his opinions from becoming dynamic convictions.

The manner, nevertheless, in which gifted and resourceful painters have responded to a complex of circumstances that is in this and in certain other respects unique in the history of art, and, perhaps, uniquely unpropitious to the creation of great works of art, provides a subject which one would suppose to be of absorbing interest. In England, at all events, this has not proved to be the case. When we consider the serious character of more than a few of the British painters of our time, the numbers of gifted writers interested in painting, and the avid and increasing interest of the public in the fine arts, the paucity of substantial writings devoted to the work of these painters is astonishing. Not long ago in one of the consistently intelligent London weekly journals there appeared a review by one of the best known British art critics of a collection of reproductions of paintings and drawings by Augustus John prefaced by a longish essay which I myself had written. The review ended with the observation that the various points I had made had been more extensively developed in previous books on the same artist. In preparation for writing my own essay I must have read almost everything that had been written about Augustus John, and was in a position to know that not only had no book upon this artist ever appeared, but how surprisingly little had been written about him. Two or three brief prefaces to slight volumes of reproductions, a handful of articles, none of them exhaustive, scattered references in books of memoirs, an informative entry in a foreign dictionary of artists, these represent approximately the extent—apart of course from innumerable reviews of exhibitions—of the critical writings on Augustus John.

The relative critical neglect of the most celebrated of living



British artists—a painter whose work carries a strong popular appeal, who is also an eloquent writer and a dramatic personality—gives some measure of the neglect suffered by lesser-known painters, indeed by British painting in general. Of recent years there have been signs of awakening literary interest in this subject. Biographies as readable as they are authoritative have been published on Steer and Sickert and the Penguin Modern Painters are making widely known a number of our most gifted contemporaries.

Year by year, however, I have been expectantly awaiting some treatment of British painting of somewhat wider scope than monographs and even the most comprehensive biographies allow: some work in which the principal figures would be placed in relation to one another, their works compared and subjected to critical investigation. I have waited, so far, in vain, and in the meanwhile the notion of making some slight attempt at something of this kind gradually took hold of me, but it was a notion to which I yielded with reluctance, for I am very conscious of my manifold disqualifications. I lack, first of all, a clear-cut view of the subject. The view of Post-Impressionism adumbrated by Sickert and belligerently developed by Dr. Thomas Bodkin is not one which I find credible. "The modern cult of Post-Impressionism," Sickert wrote, "is localized mainly in the pockets of one or two dealers holding large remainders of incompetent work. They have conceived the genial idea that if the values of criticism could only be reversed—if efficiency could only be considered a fault, and incompetence alone sublime—a roaring and easy trade could be driven. Sweating would certainly become easier with a Post-Impressionist *personnel* than with competent hands, since efficient artists are limited in number, whereas Picassos and Matisses would be painted by all the coachmen that the rise of motor traffic has thrown out of employment."<sup>1</sup>

However effective the machinations of dealers and other interested persons—if they have succeeded, that is to say, in suborning this or that influential critic, in securing the acceptance, or indeed the apotheosis of this or that spurious artist—there still remains, in the Post-Impressionist movement and in its more recent derivatives, a consistency of vision and a logical coherence of doctrine which, even were I unimpressed by the painting and

<sup>1</sup> *The English Review*, January 1912. "The Old Ladies of Etchingneedle Street."

sculpture in which they are actually made manifest, would preclude my regarding them as other than spontaneous, even, perhaps, as historically inevitable developments.

Nor, on the other hand, can I fully accept the contrary view implicit in the critical writings of Mr. Herbert Read. This writer, more interested, perhaps, in the philosophical ideas which may be supposed to underlie works of art than with the aesthetic or representational content of works of art themselves, has treated the principal revolutionary artistic movements of our time with a serious objectivity. But Mr. Read's pages, judicial though they are, unmistakably convey the cumulative impression that for him there is in revolutionary art an inherent superiority, and that representational art is a curious survival, condemned by its very nature to sterility and hardly worthy therefore of the attention of the critic. For me, a canon of criticism according to which, say, Hans Arp is accounted a figure of greater significance than, say, Stanley Spencer, is one which takes inadequate account of the evidence of one's eyes.

To Sickert the more "advanced" schools of art were "the biggest racket of the century," to Mr. Read they are the whole of art now. For me, as for Sickert, the ramp is a reality: I have seen it in action at close quarters, but it is not a very influential reality. For me, as for Mr. Read, the advanced movements are the chief focus of interest, which have in general resulted from the activities of the most vigorous and original personalities; but the wind bloweth where it listeth, and genius shows itself in representational as well as abstract form.

I cannot therefore envisage the twentieth century either as a period of retrogression or of progress, still less of stability. I am mainly conscious of a complex interplay of innumerable personalities; of the action upon these personalities of numerous and various forces—economic necessity, fashion, the momentum of traditional aesthetic movements, social change, patronage, psychological and archeological discovery and so forth—forces often mutually destructive and in any case bewildering. With the passage of time much of what presents itself to our eyes as confused will insensibly assume a settled pattern; then there will be written a history of this period accurate in perspective and secure in its critical judgments. But I am not at all certain that the historian of that distant time who looks back with justified con-

fidence upon ours may not perhaps envy a little the historian, however ludicrous his errors, to whom the artists who are the common objects of their study were familiar figures, known either directly or through their friends. Therefore it seems to me that there is an obligation upon those to whom has fallen the privilege of knowing artists, to place on record something about their personalities and their opinions. For the memory of these fades away with a pathetic swiftness. Some months ago an acquaintance told me she was engaged upon a study of Innes. Innes died only twenty-nine years ago, yet with what labour will the materials for that study be assembled!

But of what use is the study of an artist's personality? There are many critics who answer this question with an emphatic "None whatever. The work of art transcends the artist; all that need be known of him can be learnt from the study of his work."

It is a truism that we can be deeply moved by a work of art of whose creator we are entirely ignorant, as also indeed by works of art produced by societies which have vanished without other trace. But are we not moved yet more deeply by the works of art which we are able to see in relation to the personalities of the artists who made them, or against the background of the society from which they emanated? It is my conviction that we are, and that the more we know about both the artist and his subject the fuller is likely to be our comprehension of the work of art. It is difficult to think of any fact about an artist, any circumstance of his life, that does not have its effect upon his work. The idea that a painting or any other work of art can in fact transcend its creator is one which is tenable only on the assumption that the creative capacity of the artist is enhanced by a form of "inspiration" derived from some source outside himself. Until we have some knowledge of the nature of such extraneous assistance it is reasonable to assume that the artist possesses within himself the power of giving visible form to his conceptions. If this assumption is well founded, in what sense can a work of art, which is the expression of a part of a human personality, be said to transcend the whole of such a personality? For me, therefore, the artist is, in a sense, more not less important than anything he creates, which is not to say that the work of art may not be more comprehensible and more attractive than the man. (I remember, years ago, someone saying to my father, after meeting A. E. Housman, "so far

from writing *A Shropshire Lad* I shouldn't have thought him capable of reading it.") Nor do I overlook the possibility of an artist's having an imaginative comprehension of certain qualities, magnanimity, for example, or singleness of purpose, which may enable him to realize them in his art but not in his conduct; yet comprehension forms, nevertheless, an element in his own personality. In any case, the greater our knowledge of a personality, the better able we are to understand how apparently inconsistent and even irreconcilable elements form parts of a whole which can, roughly speaking, be considered one whole. And so it comes about that, with my doubts upon fundamental aesthetic problems unresolved (doubting, even, whether aesthetics, in the sense of a comprehensive system by which the value of a work of art may be judged, has any validity) and my ignorance of many important and relevant matters, I am decided to try to give some impression of certain of the painters who have been at work in England during my lifetime. It has come suddenly upon me, with a sense of shock, that Time's Winged Chariot is indeed hurrying near. That I am forty-seven years old; and that is to be full of years. Ten years ago I had occasion to reply to a girl who said that she believed I knew her parents, that this was the case, and that I knew her great grandmother. This great-grandmother was Lady Burne-Jones, but my artistic memories extend—tenuously it is true—still farther back than this, for I can remember, as a child, spending an afternoon with an original member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, William Michael Rossetti. I still plainly see the darkened room, with blinds half drawn, and, reclining upon a couch, an old man with a long grey beard and a sallow complexion, wearing a black alpaca cap, whose owl-like eyes, with dark pouches beneath, looked momentarily startled at our entrance. And I still see his relatives grouped solicitously about him and I hear my mother's voice saying: "Dear Mr. Rossetti, pray don't get up." The couch, which was large and of uncommon design, made an impression on me which I was unaware of having received. One morning during the flying-bomb attack on London, Mrs. William Michael Rossetti's daughter telephoned to me at the Tate to tell me that the Rossetti's house had been badly damaged and the family possessions, including Pre-Raphaelite pictures, were exposed to looters and the elements, and to ask whether I

would take charge of them, "And I'd be so grateful," she added, "if you would take into your care also the couch on which Shelley's body was placed when it was taken from the sea." Within a few hours the precious pictures arrived; also the couch. I instantly recognized it as that upon which, nearly forty years before, I had seen Dante Gabriel Rossetti's brother reclining. And I have had opportunities of coming in contact with a number of English painters who have been active during my lifetime, or of hearing first-hand accounts of their characters, ideas and aspects of their lives.

The exceptional complexity, if not the confusion of the spectacle of the painting of our time, as it offers itself to my contemplation, will be, in one respect at least, radically simplified in the pages which follow. There are in Great Britain to-day practitioners of the fine arts to the number of twenty thousand. Of these scarcely more than one in a thousand will be noticed at length. It is relevant, perhaps, to say a few words about the principle upon which the choice will be made. (The choice will be based upon intuitive preference.) There exist critics who claim to base their judgments upon consciously held critical canons. They may, for all I know, in fact so form their judgments, but I myself can hardly conceive of a mental process of such a nature. Indeed there is only one way in which I can conceive of judging a work of art, and that is the same as that which the greater part of mankind employs in judging their fellow-men: namely, instinct refined and sharpened and deepened not by personal experience alone but by those standards, created for us by experience through successive generations, which guide us even when we are hardly conscious of our inevitable appeal to their authority. We respond spontaneously to a fine work of art in the same way as we immediately respond to a fine character, and it is only afterwards that we begin to analyse the painting or sculpture, and thereby try to account for our response. (Equally, of course, we are liable to be deceived by spurious work, as we are by a plausible but meretricious person.) And by the same means—although the process is inevitably more complex and protracted—do we judge the totality of an artist's work, that is to say, the artist himself.

The artists noticed in the chapters which follow have been chosen on account of a series of just such intuitive preferences—



preferences founded, that is to say, chiefly upon personal response tempered by inherited canons of judgment. These painters, however, who appear to me to have distilled to its finest essence the response of our times to the world which the eye sees—by which I include both the outward and the inward eye—have few pronounced characteristics in common. A critic with a conservative bias might well object that they were all associated, at one time or another, with some revolutionary movement. That is true, for there does seem to exist some correspondence between inspired art and revolutionary art. Indeed the assumption that there is some such correspondence underlies so much current discussion about painting that it might well be suspect. But it is, in fact, well founded. All the modern masters to a more or less marked degree were revolutionaries, and all of them suffered a measure of contumely and neglect on that account. From Delacroix to Cézanne every great painter made his contribution to a revolutionary process, and the more closely we study the period the more completely is the assumption justified, and the more intimately are important painters, formerly regarded as conservative or even reactionary, understood to be implicated with change. The Surrealists, for example, have directed attention to the revolutionary elements in the early work of the Pre-Raphaelites, and Picasso to those in that of David and Ingres. But it is not only in our own age, revolutionary in every sphere of man's activity, that there has existed a correspondence in painting between greatness and innovation. Wherever we look in the long history of European painting we see the great painters associated with revolutionary developments. There is something mysterious in the persistence of this phenomenon. That such a correspondence should occur among the painters of modern Europe—in which change as radical as it is continuous has come to be accepted as an inexorable law of existence—is hardly surprising. But why should it occur with equal frequency in societies much less subject to change? It occurs, I suppose, because it is a correspondence determined not by outward circumstances but by the nature of the major artist. The possessor of superior gifts is likely to be indifferent towards continuing, with whatever distinction or power, procedures already current: his powers will predispose him to attempt what before has not been attempted. But this correspondence arises, I believe, from an impulse yet

deeper than this. The great artist demands of his art that it should express the whole of man. Therefore, more sensitive than his contemporaries, he is aware of the particular bias to which the art of his own time is subject, which incites him to a discontent—although sometimes a deeply respectful discontent—with the prevailing modes of seeing and which impels him to a conscious and radical reorientation.

Consider, for example, the origin of the discontent which brought about the new and unforeseen changes which may conveniently be taken as the beginnings of the chief contemporary movements, at the very moment when Impressionism appeared to have imposed itself as a great central tradition of Western painting, and to have established a kind of "norm" of vision. The doctrines which crystallized around this movement were at least as lucid and compelling as those associated with Neo-classical art, which had dominated the academies of Europe since the Renaissance. The aims which it proposed were aims which represented the culmination of centuries of sustained effort on the part of a broad succession of European painters to represent the material world in the closest accord with the facts of vision; its exponents could hardly have been a more brilliant company, indeed they included the most considerable painters in Europe.

These considerations were such as to beguile any young painter into the Impressionist movement, which did in fact attract a mass following, and it ultimately became the acknowledged academic tradition. It was challenged only by a few of the most sensitive and independent painters of a younger generation, who, although they looked upon the great Impressionists with reverence and affection, were intuitively conscious of a certain incompleteness in their enchanted vision of the world.

The major aim of the Impressionists may be said to have been the representation, on the spot, and with the utmost truth, of a casually selected fragment of the visible world. Impressionist truth was different from that older conception of truth which expressed itself in the accumulation of meticulously rendered detail; it was in essence comprehensive. Impressionist painters were not at all concerned with the panoramic. Almost any fragment of the visible world, in their view, was a worthy subject for a picture, but such fragments, arbitrarily come upon, are inevitably without the elaborate balance of subjects either carefully selected

or deliberately composed. The Impressionists, therefore, imposed upon their subjects a comprehensive unity of *tone* in the same way as Nature herself invariably binds together in a harmonious envelope of atmosphere any group of objects, however incongruous they may be or however awkwardly disposed. It was through truth of tone they were able to achieve a new kind of accuracy. The power which they derived from their extraordinary command of tone, of giving unity to any stretch of landscape, to any group of persons, had the effect of inducing painters to visualize the world in terms of its surface and to be forgetful of the rock and bone beneath, to see, that is to say, in terms of colour rather than of form.

In order to set upon their pictures the final stamp of truth, it was logical that these should have the appearance of having been begun and completed at a sitting, under precisely the conditions of weather and light represented in the picture. In Northern Europe these notoriously change from hour to hour, and as it is evident that large and elaborately "finished" pictures could only very rarely be painted in such conditions, Impressionist paintings, in order to carry conviction, must have the character of sketches.

Preoccupation with colour as distinct from form and with verisimilitude of so exacting an order, inevitably excluded from Impressionist art many qualities, notably the reflective and monumental qualities which characterized most of the great art of the past. It was the absence of certain of these from the art which was created by the masters of Impressionism that provoked in the most sensitive and independent among those who were always proud to proclaim themselves their disciples an uneasy awareness of the qualities it lacked. Cézanne's often quoted remark that they must recreate Impressionism according to the art of the museums was an expression, not of a desire to return to a tradition but of a consciousness of how small a part of the whole man was expressed by Impressionist art, of how great a sacrifice had been made to its corruscating perfection. The masters of Cézanne's generation each tried to restore to painting one of the qualities sacrificed: Gauguin, an exotic poetry; van Gogh, a passionate humanity; Seurat, monumental and elaborate formal harmony, and Cézanne himself the rocky or bony framework of things. The great Impressionists were themselves aware that, in their intoxicatingly new approach to the actual appearance of



things, in their close pursuit of a beauty miraculous because it was not an imagination or a dream but the tangible beauty of all created things, their art lacked a certain massive reflectiveness. There came a time when the bathers of Renoir became sculptural in themselves and monumental in their composition, while Pissarro with a sublime humbleness made experiments under the guidance of Seurat, one of his own disciples, in directions clearly repugnant to his own innate genius, and declared that Impressionism "should be nothing more than a theory of observation, without entailing the loss of fantasy, freedom, grandeur, all that makes for great art."<sup>1</sup>

Now that more than half a century separates us from the decade when the finest painters of an oncoming generation were manifesting their awareness of the failure of the art of their great Impressionist teachers to express the whole man, it is not difficult for us to understand the nature of the readjustment which was taking place. But from that decade onwards how increasingly difficult it becomes to perceive any "norm" of vision or any central traditions! From decade to decade confusion grows, and what remains of the central traditions of Cézanne, of Gauguin and of van Gogh becomes more and more dissolved into individual idiosyncrasy.

<sup>1</sup> *Camille Pissarro, Letters to his son Lucien*, edited by John Revald, 1943, p. 23.

(To be concluded)

# A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO VEDANTA

By  
GEOFFREY ASHE

## I

**M**R. CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD, whom Vedanta may justly reckon one of its chief Western conquests, has lately been at pains to present it in a form comprehensible and accessible to the still largely unconquered Western world. With the blessing of Mr. Aldous Huxley, he has asserted in various ways that Vedanta is the perennial philosophy. It is not, as a matter of fact; if only because Vedantins do not agree among themselves. But it transmits a great philosophical tradition enshrined in great literature, and the array of saintly figures who have lived under its influence is enough warrant for its claim to universal respect. In the following study I shall try to analyse some of its central tenets; to bring them into relationship with Catholic thought, as expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas; and to discuss briefly the possibilities of a Christian Vedanta.

What is Vedanta? The word means "end of the Vedas," and referred originally to the Sanskrit books known as Upanishads, which were attached, during the millennium before Christ, to the older Hindu "Vedas" or Scriptures. The Upanishads embody a confused mass of cosmological and metaphysical speculation, some of it crude, some of it subtle and thought-provoking. From the eighth Christian century to the thirteenth, a series of scholars laboured with varying results to erect on this basis a religion and a philosophy. In the nineteenth century, through the efforts of Hindu saints such as Ramakrishna, there was a considerable spiritual re-awakening in India. It shaped the lives of men like Tagore and Gandhi; and it made what may loosely be described as "Vedanta"—now in the sense of "*completion of the Vedas*"—a working faith for innumerable people. The schools differ, but

I the underlying set of ideas, though too ill-defined to be called a philosophy itself, shows a fixed pattern.

There are two principal Vedantic systems, the Pure Monist (or, as it combatively calls itself, the Non-Dualist), and the Modified Monist. The former, which is the more important, received its classical exposition at the hands of Śankara (born about A.D. 788); the latter was reduced to order by Ramanuja, several centuries later. Both men were southern Indians of immense learning and sanctity, leaders in the prolonged Hindu Counter-Reformation which extinguished Buddhism and weakened Jainism throughout the peninsula. Their purpose was to extract from the Hindu Scriptures, chiefly the Upanishads themselves and the famous *Bhagavad Gita*, a coherent and civilized scheme of doctrine. Ramanuja represents a reaction against Śankara, whose austere mysticism he sought to correct, but among Vedantins generally he is not held in such high estimation. Śankara has been compared to St. Thomas, whose plan of composition resembles his: he argues each point by stating the contrary of his own position (which he calls "the superficial view"), and then refuting it.

Vedanta teaches, first, that Man is in a condition of bondage. Illusion, desire, passion—all the qualities Christians associate with sin—entangle him with the perishable, and condemn him by an iron causal law known as karma to continual reincarnation and the wretchedness of a multitude of lives. His proper end is not the fruition of any earthly desire, which, however noble, can only complicate his entanglement, nor even the bliss of personal existence in heaven, so far as he covets it for his own satisfaction. Salvation is release from desire, and release is to be attained by knowledge: by a terrestrial foretaste of the true end of Man—knowledge of the Divine Essence, or Brahman. Brahman comprehends personality and may legitimately be called God, though Vedantins often distinguish God-as-personal by the name *Ívara*. The distinction between *Ívara* and Brahman is like Meister Eckhart's distinction between God and "Godhead." Some Hindu sages add the doctrine of a divine introspection—most fascinatingly suggestive of the "generation" within the Trinity—by which God produces a Logos who is himself. This Logos is symbolized by the Omnific Word AUM. The Trimurti, often inaccurately described as the Trinity of the Hindus, corresponds

to the letters of this word: Brahma, God as Creator, is A; Vishnu, God as Preserver, is U; Śiva, God as Destroyer, is M. Thus, when Vishnu undergoes one of his avatars or incarnations, he speaks for the entire indivisible Godhead, and as such he teaches Prince Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The ordering of Man toward Brahman has two principal results. First, he moves toward a knowledge which embraces all knowledge: that is, the knowledge of the Divine Essence in which everything is contained. "Vedanta," says V. S. Iyer,<sup>1</sup> "is knowledge that has for its aim the solution of the mystery of all existence." The claim is not excessively arrogant. But this knowledge entails a special ethical consequence. God, as the *Gita* says (XI. 18), contains the eternal perfection (dharma) of every creature. Hence a Vedantin abandons the commonplace calculating morality of everyday life, refers his conduct to that Essence in which his problems are eternally stated and solved, and lives by duty instead of desire. As he approaches fitness for the Beatific Vision, he escapes from the bondage of the perishable. After death he is fully united to God, and experiences erring human nature no more.

So far the spirit of the system is almost Christian, and a few quotations from St. Thomas may serve to show how his philosophy is a sort of Vedanta.

Man's ultimate happiness consists in the contemplation of truth . . . Now, it is not possible that Man's ultimate happiness consist in contemplation based on the understanding of first principles . . . nor does it consist in the sciences that have the lowest things for their object. . . . It follows, then, that Man's ultimate happiness consists in wisdom, based on the consideration of divine things. (*S.C.G.*, III. 37.)

The natural desire of the intellect is to know all the genera, species and powers of things, and the whole order of the universe. . . . Every-one that knows the divine substance knows all the things mentioned above. . . . It belongs to the perfection of an intellectual substance to know the nature, powers and proper accidents of every species; and therefore it will obtain this in the final beatitude through the vision of the Divine Essence. (*S.C.G.*, III. 59.)

All the perfections of all things are in God. (*Summa Theologica*, I. 4. 2.)

No one who sees the essence of God can willingly turn away from

<sup>1</sup> *The Cultural Heritage of India*, I, p. 527.

God, which means to sin. Hence all who see God through his essence are so firmly established in the love of God, that for eternity they can never sin. (S.T., I. 94. 1.)

But what of the actual process of deliverance? The *Gita* introduces a Saviour, namely Krishna, and inculcates loving devotion to him, but his atoning work is merely the re-affirmation and expansion of an older Upanishadic gnosis. This gnosis, this liberating wisdom, depends on the difficult conception of "Atman," and finds its most dramatic expression in the formula "THAT ART THOU" (tat tvam asi); "THAT" being the Absolute. The formula is Mr. Huxley's starting-point in *The Perennial Philosophy*. Atman means "self," and a Western reader might be inclined hastily to translate it "soul." However, it is not "soul"; jiva is "soul"—and the monistic Vedanta dismisses jiva as illusion. Atman is the oversoul of mankind, which is really the same in all; and THAT ART THOU, the saving affirmation of oneness with God, is a statement of inalienable identity. Thou art Atman, and Atman is not created by Brahman or connected with Brahman, it *is* Brahman. In reality God is the only conscious being. Realize that, say the Monist Vedantins, and you will be free. Your vain service of the imaginary god Yourself will cease, and with it your human sufferings.

To the religious character, Vedanta is apt to make a powerful appeal. It has the directness of some of the nobler heresies, such as Quakerism, which seek God without an earthly mediator. But unlike these heresies, impoverished as they are by their revolt against the Catholic Church, it keeps the nature of the Divine Essence clearly before it. The Vedantin masters explain in detail how life should be ordered toward Brahman, since in Brahman are all the proper perfections of Man, and the end of Man is the knowledge of Brahman.

Yet in the work of Vedanta's principal exponent, the Monist Śankara, it is to this very preoccupation with the Divine Essence that the worst shortcomings are due. Śankara, taking THAT ART THOU literally, goes on to deny the contingent universe. As far as Man is concerned, nothing really is, save Brahman; the created order is at most a bewildering shadow. If the phrase were not frivolous, we might say that the Monist Vedantins are God-intoxicated men who reverse normal intoxication by seeing one thing where the sober see more than one. As an Eleatic exercise,



or a topic for Plotinus or Shelley, Monism has a certain magnificence. But observe where it leads Śankara.

To begin with, individual selfhood seems to be a basic fact of experience. But the Atman or Self, say the Upanishads, is one with Brahman. Therefore all men have one Self or Soul, which is identical with God, and individuality is a pernicious fiction. Before examining the metaphysics of Śankara's theory, let us see how St. Thomas faces the problem. He asks "Whether the intellectual soul knows itself by its essence," and answers this question in the negative—like David Hume ("I never can catch myself"). How, then, does self-knowledge arise?

Everything is knowable so far as it is in act, and not so far as it is in potentiality. . . . *The intellect knows itself, not by its essence, but by its act.* This happens in two ways: In the first place, singularly, as when Socrates or Plato perceives that he has an intellectual soul because he perceives that he understands. In the second place, universally, as when we consider the nature of the human mind from a knowledge of the intellectual act. (S.T., I. 87. 1.)

Śankara's teaching is quite similar. He maintains, however, that the entire process is a kind of mirage, due to the illegitimate transference of properties from the phenomenal realm to the Atman. The known individual "self" (aham-padartha) is a wholly spurious construction, a dummy composed of the bric-à-brac of sense impressions; and there can be no release from suffering, no realization of union with God, till this idol is done away with.

But selfhood, that basic fact of experience, remains; common sense will not be silenced so easily. Śankara's next line of defence is a colossal *credo quia impossibile*. He asserts that experience is innately false. Human knowledge is avidya (which means something very like "ignorance"), and the realm of reason is confined to empiric relationships—the pointer-readings of Eddington. "The nature of the one Reality must be known by one's own clear spiritual perception; it cannot be known through a learned man." Śankara elaborates the following text from the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* (IV. 9-10).

This whole world the illusion-maker projects out of this (Brahman). And in it by illusion (maya) the other (the individual soul) is confined. Now, one should know that Nature is illusion, and that the Mighty Lord is the illusion-maker. (R. E. Hume's translation.)

The Hindu conception of maya is extremely complex. Originally it meant "magic." From this meaning two later ones developed, "creation" and "illusion." The two never became fully separate, and, in the text cited, the word faces both ways. Śankara approves of the double sense. The world, he thinks, is eternally deceptive. Selfhood, though a basic fact of experience, is the greatest and most deadly illusion of all. Liberation can come only through self-oblivion, and a heartfelt assent to the famous formula THAT ART THOU.

"From the standpoint of Brahman," writes a modern Vedantin, Nikhilananda,<sup>1</sup> "there is neither creation of the universe nor preservation nor destruction. But from the relative standpoint the *fact* of creation cannot be denied, though the *act* of creation cannot be proved. Vedanta, in order to interpret the universe, makes use of the concept of maya. . . . Through illusion, or maya, Brahman appears as the universe. The ideas of time, space, causality, name, and form are superimposed upon the Pure Consciousness. But they do not alter the nature of Brahman. This power of creating illusion is inherent in Brahman Itself and unknowable to the human mind, which itself is a product of maya. One cannot inquire into the cause of a dream as long as one is dreaming."

The consequence of this is philosophically disastrous. In discussing Brahman, Śankara does attempt once (rather inconsistently) to employ the argument from design; but in the main he merely systematizes Scripture, because he has knocked the props from under reason. Scripture itself appears to support him. The Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gita* agree in tracing the liberating secret to a primitive revelation vouchsafed by God at the opening of the cosmic cycle. Śankara's position, then, is an extreme mystical Traditionalism, which goes to the length of claiming that contradictory truths about Brahman are both valid if affirmed by Scripture. A statement, he holds, may be empirically true but metaphysically false, or vice versa. It is hard to see, in view of the primary empirical fact which he does challenge, how he could possibly avoid this conclusion. Moreover, why the avidya? Why the partitioning of the one Absolute Self into innumerable blinded and suffering pseudo-individuals? On account of karma; on account of past sin. But sin, a revolt against

<sup>1</sup> *The Bhagavad Gita*, p. 188.

the Absolute, implies prior separation, for a single God cannot will against himself. Sin, therefore, extends backwards for ever, and karma is carried forward across the intercosmic night from one creation to the next.

So the Monist Vedanta ends in a morass. "We do not explain the world," say its exponents; "we explain it away." Though the world is inexplicable, the key to salvation does exist, and the rare seer may lay his hand upon it. But he cannot communicate his insight to others, and religion for the unregenerate millions becomes a paradoxical dogmatism. Śankara's creed resembles that of the old Orphic Mysteries: he makes the whole created order a fraud and a trap, from which the initiate must escape by gnosis. We cannot investigate the results for philosophy, because philosophy has long since gone her way, and is now nowhere to be seen. The results for religion are evident and disturbing. As Man is not really a separate being, God (in the words of the Upanishad) must be the illusion-maker, and this notion even the sublime *Gita* accepts (VII. 14). To put the matter more brutally, God is a deceiver. In the epic *Mahabharata*, which received its last touches when the doctrine of maya was already highly developed, the revisers left intact a passage (VII. 191) which relates how Krishna—the earthly embodiment of God—made his human friends tell a vile and tortuous lie in order to win a battle.

## II

Among the Hindus, an orthodox religious philosopher must ground his teaching in Scripture. This requirement entails the composition of three commentaries: one on the Upanishads, one on the *Gita*, and one on a group of obscure mystical texts known as Sutras. Only a system which has thus been reconciled in detail with Holy Writ may claim to be called Vedantic, but there is no necessary limit to the multiplication of systems.

Now it is still an open question whether a Christian Vedanta must be ruled out of court. Western scholars have always tended to be a little overawed by the paramountcy of Śankara, whose doctrine of individual annihilation they suppose to be *de fide* from Mangalore to Calcutta. His English translator, however, George Thibaut, was by no means convinced that Śankara's interpretation of the Scriptures was either traditional or inevitable;



and there are three other important Vedantic schools—notably that of the theist Ramanuja—which differ from his to a greater or less extent. The possibility that Catholic Christianity is, so to speak, the soundest “completion of the Vedas,” granted only a proper definition of terms, is one that deserves careful study. Enlightened Hindus such as A. K. Coomaraswamy have often maintained that the gap between the two faiths ought to admit of being narrowed. Perhaps they are right. At any rate, the first step must be an examination of the term *Atman*, and of the gnosis *THAT ART THOU*. If Śankara is correct, and the Hindu Scriptures compel a belief in the identity of Man and God, there need be no further discussion. However, the matter is in fact very far from clear.

“*Atman*” refers to an inner conscious principle: that much is beyond dispute. Though usually involved with material Nature (*prakriti*), *Atman* is capable of a supernatural orientation. It exists in all human beings, it exists in Brahman, and it somehow constitutes a unity between Man and God, a unity not contingent on grace or righteousness, but essential and inalienable. To grasp this unity is the way of salvation.

Can we give *Atman* a Christian meaning?

“*Soul*” will not do. Souls are separate—the forms of the bodies they inhabit—and if we consider the relationship between souls and God, the basic proposition of Christianity is “*THAT ART not THOU*.” St. Thomas does actually discuss the theory of an over-soul (*S.T.*, I. 76. 2), and rejects it on grounds of common sense.

If Socrates and Plato have one intellect, it would follow that Socrates and Plato are one man, and that they are not distinct from each other, except by something outside the essence of each. The distinction between Socrates and Plato would then not be other than that of one man with a tunic and another with a cloak; which is quite absurd. . . . It is impossible for many distinct individuals to have one form, just as it is impossible for them to have one being.

These arguments can only be overthrown by a downright dismissal of all experience, in the manner of Śankara.

Let us try again. If the Hindu seers have glimpsed the truth at all, *Atman* is some sort of universal inner reality which we have in common with the Absolute Being. It is the H.C.F. of divine and human nature. Stated thus, the problem virtually solves itself. *Atman* is Thought, or, more concretely, the system

of all thought, otherwise known as Mind—not *a* mind, but Mind in general, like Plotinus' Nous. In the Christian scheme, human nature is made to the image and likeness of the divine nature; the likeness consists in the attribute of Mind; and likeness is a species of unity, an objective link between the two natures which cannot be dissolved by sin, though sin—the struggle to break the link—is the cause of continued blindness and suffering.

Although in all creatures there is some kind of likeness to God, in the rational creature alone do we find a likeness of *image*, as we have explained above; whereas in other creatures we find a likeness by way of a *trace*. Now the intellect or mind is that whereby the rational creature excels other creatures. Hence, this image of God is not found even in the rational creature except in the mind. (S.T., I. 93. 6.)

Likeness is a kind of unity, for oneness in quality causes likeness, as the Philosopher says. (S.T., I. 93. 9.)

The liberating Upanishadic gnosis, therefore, is simply the recognition of the existence of God: of an Absolute Mind, and of our kinship to it. "Thou art Mind and God is Mind." The proper perfection of human nature, moreover, is the perfection of this kinship. It is the union (not, of course, the blending) of the two natures, the human and divine.

Clearly we have not lost touch with the indwelling spirit of Vedanta, and the writings of the great Christian mystics are favourable to the interpretation proposed. But now we reach a point where the Christian creed begins to transcend and complete Vedanta, while diverging, for the first time, from the opinions of esoterics like Mr. Huxley. Christians hold that in one Person the two diverse yet reconcilable natures were once actually united. For normal humanity, THAT ART THOU is a profound metaphor, a poetic suggestion; but in one case it was literally true; a man did live who was verily Brahman. In the Christian scheme the liberating union occurs *historically*.<sup>1</sup> Atonement is a fact, not a formula. Catholicism is the ordering of the fact, and it is just this ordering which has eluded Hinduism. In the Church the perfect union of the two natures is participated through

<sup>1</sup> Contrast A. K. Coomaraswamy, writing of the principal forms of Buddhism and Hinduism: "The Mahayanist believer is warned—precisely as the worshipper of Krishna is warned in the Vaishnavite scriptures that the Krishna Lila is not a history, but a process for ever unfolded in the heart of Man—that matters of historical fact are without religious significance."

membership of Christ's mystical body, and perpetuated on earth by the sacrifice of the Mass. St. Thomas, refuting the objection that incarnation would add something to divinity, says that through the life of Christ

the humanity which formerly was not united to divinity now becomes united thereto (S.T., III. I. I.)—

it is Man, not God, that is enhanced. By sanctifying grace, men are made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4).

Walter Farrell, in his *Companion to the Summa* (Vol. IV, p. 341), draws a very clear distinction. "The wisdom of the East," he says, "advocated a unity of absorption; by it, a man was united to the Absolute, but to the complete destruction of his own individuality and personality. . . . The unity which has been the characteristic aim of the West insists upon a rigid safeguarding of the individuality and personality of Man. . . . In the concrete, this unity is one of order and of friendship, rather than one of physical absorption. The unity of order is accomplished by truth, a unity of intellect in the recognition of Man's place in the universe. . . . The bonds of order and friendship, tying men to all the universe and the Creator of that universe by truth and love, are altogether unintelligible without the enduring sovereignty of the individual mind and will. The supernatural medium of this latter unity is the Eucharist, both as a sacrament and a sacrifice; Augustine's description of it as 'the bond of unity,' understood in this sense of unity, states the very nature, the beauty, and the immeasurable value of the Eucharist to men."

There is nothing comparable in Hinduism, for there is no true Incarnation, only a kind of mirage. Vishnu, with all his avatars, never puts on humanity. Even Krishna, his best-known, best-loved, and least improbably historical "incarnation," remains impassive and often rather inhuman. He teaches; he directs human affairs; but he never suffers. The historical Krishna may have been a prophet, but no one even pretends that he was a Christ, a single Person combining two natures.

If we grant Man an independent soul,<sup>1</sup> what becomes of maya? Does this principle of error in the created order still correspond

<sup>1</sup> The Sanskrit philosophical vocabulary has a word ready for it, namely "jīva," so I do not think we are necessarily on the wrong track.

to anything real? Is there still an avidya standing between ourselves and the liberating knowledge of the Absolute Mind?

It might almost be enough to quote St. Thomas' contention that the existence of God is not self-evident (*S.T.*, I. 2. 1), from which it would follow that the proposed interpretation of THAT ART THOU is not obviously true. There is, of course, a rough-and-ready connection between avidya and invincible ignorance. But we can go deeper. Maya, as we saw, is the creative activity of God. Now in what does this consist? A study of St. Thomas' five proofs of the existence of God from the structure of the created order (*S.T.*, I. 2. 3) discloses that they all depend on the same principle: namely, that nothing can pass by itself from potentiality to act. For example, a block of stone will not become a statue, a mass of water will not become an iceberg, without external agents. But without an ultimate self-existent Agent, the lesser agents could not function at all; they could not even exist, because no possible-but-not-necessary being could ever be actualized. St. Thomas traces the direct work of God in every agent (*S.T.*, I. 105. 5). It follows, therefore, that maya in Thomist terms is a continual actualization of potentiality.

But "everything is knowable so far as it is in act, and not so far as it is in potentiality" (*S.T.*, I. 87. 1). Hence God's activity, which implies a mixture of potentiality and act in the world, contains inherent possibilities of illusion. The world always contains more than the intellect can know, in continual process of transformation. Maya *can* generate—we need not say that it *must* generate—avidya. Moreover, it will be recalled that Nikhilananda describes the mind itself as a product of maya, and thus necessarily deceptive. Now our attainment of knowledge is itself a progress from potentiality to act, not an immediate event. (*S.T.*, I. 85. 5). In every act of knowledge there is a phase of imperfection—perhaps a very long phase, as in the solution of a difficult cryptogram—and throughout this phase the possibility of error persists. Prejudice, inertia, and, above all, wishful thinking, will commonly impel people to deliver judgment falsely before the act is complete. So the possibility of error is rooted in the created intellect itself, and the theory of maya has an intelligible Christian meaning.

Do we admit, then, that God is a deceiver? No, because once the fatal notion of Monism is overcome, once the individual

soul is established, room for independent action appears. According to St. Thomas, God made Man superior to maya in all that concerned his eternal welfare.

In order to direct his own life and that of others, Man needs to know not only those things which can be naturally known, but also things surpassing natural knowledge, because the life of Man is directed to a supernatural end. . . . Therefore the first man was endowed with such a knowledge of these supernatural truths as was necessary for the direction of human life in that state.

As long as the state of innocence continued, it was impossible for the human intellect to assent to falsehood as if it were truth.

(S.T., I. 94. 3, 4.)

Man, however, fell into sin, and lost his native incapacity for misjudgment. St. Thomas is quite at one with the *Gita*,<sup>1</sup> and with Indian religious thought generally, in tracing all our woes to the desire for created things in themselves.

When the will was turned away from God, all the other powers of the soul became inordinate. . . . The lack of order in the other powers of the soul consists chiefly in their turning inordinately to mutable good; and this lack of order may be called by the general name of concupiscence. (S.T., IIa. 82. 3.)

This "concupiscence," in its innumerable forms, produced and produces sin; sin leads to more concupiscence, and to ignorance.

This same original justice was forfeited through the sin of our first parent, as we have already stated, so that all the powers of the soul are left, as it were, destitute of their proper order, whereby they are naturally directed to virtue. Now destitution is called a wounding of nature. . . . In so far as the reason is deprived of its order to the true, there is the wound of ignorance . . . and in so far as the concupiscible is deprived of its order to the delectable as moderated by reason, there is the wound of concupiscence. (S.T., IIa. 85. 3.)

St. Thomas adds that the wounds of nature are inflicted by actual as well as by original sin. Nor yet has he unravelled the entire tangle. Concupiscence leads to passion, and passion joins ignorance to multiply sin once more.<sup>2</sup>

The Catholic view of Man as a being essentially separate from God, though united with him by community of spiritual nature,

<sup>1</sup> See the *Gita* passim; particularly III. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S.T., IIa, 76. 1, 2 and 77.2.



does not yield a system to which that of Śankara must in logic give way; for he ultimately rejects logic itself. However, the system which it does yield is surely much more human than his, and infinitely more rational. The doctrine of separation, by its conformity with common sense, avoids his plunge into paradox, which (as we saw) cripples the reason, turns all religion to mystical metaphysics, and dooms the normal non-mystical man to an indefinitely protracted bondage. At the same time, by introducing the possibility that God made Man exempt from the mental warpings which cloud his intellect and endanger his soul, and that Man forfeited this exemption by an act of his own, the same doctrine saves the divine integrity and acquits the Absolute of falsehood. The affirmation of this one principle, in short, restores the logical foundation for ethics, metaphysics, and science.

More stimulating, however, is the prospect that full and fair discussion may prepare the way for a new Vedanta. The profound cleavages among the traditional Vedantic schools show plainly that the field is not closed. It would be quite possible to compose the basic Scriptural commentaries which Hindu orthodoxy requires, making use of Western thought to enrich and interpret the baffling originals; and, granted an understanding on the meaning of Atman, and hence on the Upanishadic gnosis, there is seemingly nothing to rule out an interpretation acceptable (so far as it goes) to both Catholic and Hindu.<sup>1</sup> Acceptance by Hindus of an Atonement occurring historically is, of course, another matter, and here the inveterate Indian contempt for the created order raises great obstacles. But two points need to be stressed. First, the practice by Christians of the Hindu method in religious philosophy, accompanied by a genuine interchange of views with its best living teachers, might at least result in a common language—as it were—to serve the ends of future debate. Secondly, the construction of a Catholic Vedanta would entail an explicit analysis of the relationship between the divine and human natures. From this could follow a clarification, such as few Hindus appear to have attained, of the difference between the Incarnation of Christ and the avatars of Vishnu. The doctrine

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of reincarnation is too vast in its scope for discussion here. But certainly it is not so rigidly defined as to rule out a new interpretation, and one such interpretation is, in fact, suggested by certain Buddhist writers.

of the Incarnation, even when grasped, might not be approved; but there would be something refreshing in a mere comprehension of the issue. That all the parties to a discussion should know what they are talking about is, after all, not unimportant. If Hindus are to understand the thoughts and beliefs of Catholics, it is the task of the Catholics to create, by adventuring with due humility and respect into the vast realm of Hinduism, a technique of philosophic communication more apt to the purpose than any which has yet been devised.

## VISION OF ROSE

By  
FRANCIS KING

THE dandy in which Aubrey Hanfield jolted up the hill-path was carried on the shoulders of four sweating coolies, and it was symptomatic of the change from six years ago that he no longer experienced the slightest shame at this mode of travel. Below him the four wretches strained, panted and picked their way over obstacles, while he lay back, without thinking about them; or, if he thought at all, it was with distaste, because a sweet-sour exhalation rose from their half-naked bodies to taint the evening breeze. Beyond the hill which they were now ascending, the Himalayas flushed rosily in the light of evening, the sky deepened, the sun sank. Below, far below, at the foot of the slope up which the coolies had hauled him, the lake lay in shadow; it was a deep violet, and sails crossed and re-crossed over its surface. He remembered how, six years ago coming up this same incline, he had experienced a wonderful elation; the mountain air had intoxicated him, and there seemed a strange, unreal quality about the light. After many months in the plains he had forgotten what colour looked like; he had forgotten these subtle gradations, the one merging into the other, the pink of the distant snow, the lake, the grey of the hillside. He had felt

breathless then, as he looked about him, and he had called out to Stanton who travelled in the dandy in front: "I say! This is incredible." Stanton was once more in front of him, but he no longer felt that same need to shout his enthusiasm.

Looking at him in the dandy one would not imagine that he was a successful man. He had recently recovered from a bout of dysentery; his skin was yellow, he tended to stoop, his hair was brittle. The expression of his face was wry. A man of about forty, he had high cheek-bones, thin bluish lips, and a hooked nose. He had looked different six years ago, for then, although it was before the publication of the book which was to make his name and he lacked the money and the esteem which were now commonplaces to him, he had been plumper, had held himself upright, had laughed loudly and frequently and made boisterous jokes. Success had soured him, as failure sours others.

As they neared the house, Stanton called back to him: "At last! I expect you'd like a bath and a change, wouldn't you? But first you must have a peg."

They sat out together on the verandah, and Stanton talked, in his over-expressive, high-pitched voice, making large gestures and giggling and calling Hanfield "My dear." He was a small man with an obviously intense love of clothes and the wisp of a moustache. Unlike the other bachelors with whom Hanfield had stayed during his travels, he lived in great comfort.

So many of them seemed merely to camp in their bungalows, their rooms bare except for a few cumbersome pieces of furniture, usually upholstered in leather, their food tasteless, their servants inefficient; but Stanton had made his house one of the most luxurious in the province. For of course he had private means. He was always "picking up" things in the bazaars, spending much money on carpets and tables inlaid with ivory and ornaments of jade, most of them in execrable taste; and because of this buying he had come to be regarded as a connoisseur and the wives of the other Europeans were always asking his opinion on how to decorate their rooms. He never tired of declaring that the plumbing in his bungalow was the best for many hundreds of miles.

During their conversation Hanfield said little: he stared morosely into his glass. Stanton irritated him, in countless ways; he disliked the intonations of his voice, his familiarity and his



love of gossip. He was as catty as a woman and undeniably treacherous. But mixed with the contempt that Hanfield felt for him was also a certain admiration. At least exile had not blunted his sensibilities or forced him into the common mould. At a cost, he had preserved his individuality, his quickness of wit and his capacity for enjoyment. He had kept a grip on life; he had refused to be bored. God knows what had brought him to India, but once there he had not become dull. Certainly he had paid for this; paid for it by a certain artificiality, the theatrical zest which he brought to life. Little happened in Raini; there were occasional squabbles, someone got married, someone got promoted, but out of these insignificant events Stanton created a picture, implausible, novelettish and yet vastly refreshing to one who had been overwhelmed by the essential tediousness of Anglo-Indian life.

At this moment he was retailing to Hanfield all the gossip which had accumulated since his last visit of six years ago. "Do you remember the Cleaver woman? Yes . . . that's the one. No, not the girl who took the photographs, but the one I told you suffered from gall-stones. Well, she went home last summer, and her husband. . . ." Hanfield listened from force of habit. Later, he would compress this conversation and jot it into a notebook. This was the way he worked, making innumerable observations, reporting conversations, sketching in a description, so that often he was in possession of material sufficient for half a dozen novels. He was a "professional" novelist—that was the adjective which he always liked to use about himself—and he had so trained himself that, even when he was tired or ill or concentrating on something else, his eye and his ear worked unflaggingly.

Suddenly, Stanton stopped in the middle of his conversation. He touched Hanfield's sleeve, making the older man glance at him sourly. "Oh, by the way, my dear—I hope you don't mind. I've asked some people over to dinner to-night, and—" he giggled—"your Rosie is coming."

"My Rosie?" Hanfield was puzzled. "What are you talking about?" he asked irritably.

"Your Rosie. She's coming to dinner. She said she wanted to see you again." Then misinterpreting the look on Hanfield's face: "You're not angry, are you? I thought you'd be amused to renew acquaintances."

"But who the hell is this Rosie?"

"Rose Macheath. Or if you prefer it—Rose Pearsall."

Hanfield glared malevolently at Stanton. "What on earth are you driving at?"

Stanton giggled. "I've told you. It's quite simple. Your Rosie still lives here; she's never left the place. And I thought——"

"But good God! Rosie has never existed outside my own imagination. There's never been a woman like that."

"Now then! Now then!" Stanton's laughter tinkled merrily. "You're not going to pull that one over on me. My dear, it's common knowledge; everyone out here knows that Rosie Pearsall is your Rosie. You needn't be afraid. She won't sue you for libel. She doesn't want any more scandal than she's had already."

"I don't know what you're talking about. I tell you, Rose was an entirely imaginary character."

"Oh, entirely! Do you honestly expect one to believe that? I mean, it's so obvious. There's the name to begin with—Rose. Of course, old Pearsall wasn't a missionary as you made him in the story. One can understand that. It adds a certain piquancy if the man is a missionary, instead of being just a planter. In any case, you wanted to contrast the simple faith of the husband with the treachery of the other two. That's just poetic licence."

"But I've never even set eyes on this—this Rose Pearsall."

"Oh, come! My dear fellow, you played bridge with her. I was there."

"I've played bridge with a number of women in the last six years."

Stanton looked at him with mingled disgust and admiration. "Don't you ever feel ashamed?" he asked.

"Ashamed! Why the hell should I feel ashamed?"

"Well, I suppose you have to do it. And I suppose that, in the long run, it's worth the price. I mean, if you'd thought about Rosie's feelings, the world would have lost a masterpiece. One has to be ruthless, I see that. After all, one of your books is worth a dozen of the people who've suffered from them. But don't you ever feel a pang of conscience? You come out here, you accept our hospitality, and then you go and write about us."

"And don't you enjoy it!" Hanfield snapped back at him; he was sensitive on this point.

"Some of us do. But take Rosie. You may say that she deserved

to be exposed like that; after all, she is a murderess, and perhaps she should be made to suffer. But, you know, you've given that poor woman six years of absolute, undiluted torture—and how many more years to come."

"Oh, go to blazes! If some poor wretch takes it into her head that I'm writing about her——"

"There's one thing I've often wondered about. How did you get hold of the story? How did you make her confess to you? I suppose you have a nose for that sort of thing. You must have, it's your job. . . . Funny that before that none of us suspected. When we heard the news of Pearsall's death we all felt sorry for her; and then when young Russell shot himself we all said what hard luck it was, losing first her husband and then his assistant. We none of us suspected—none of us. *Vision of Rose* came as an absolute bomb-shell. I got the book first, and I could hardly believe my eyes. But once one had read the story, there could be no doubt about it. I certainly hand it to you. You got those three absolutely taped."

"I see," Hanfield said, with heavy irony. "And I suppose that when the Superintendent of Police read *Vision of Rose* he immediately instituted proceedings."

"He'd like to have! But, by that time, all evidence had been destroyed. . . . Of course, no one has any doubts on the matter, and, if you tackle her, Rose herself just about admits that she did away with the man."

Hanfield suddenly began laughing; he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks and he had to wipe them away with his handkerchief. "I don't pretend to understand it," he said. "Though God knows the same sort of thing has happened once or twice before. Dim people in out-of-the-way places seem to acquire a mania for notoriety, and, given the latent 'schadenfreude' of the average human being, it's easy enough to get oneself mistaken for a character in a book."

"But my dear, do you really think any woman would *want* to be mistaken for a murderess?"

"Human nature is strange," Hanfield murmured. Then he snapped: "For heaven's sake, stop calling me 'my dear'."

"I can't help it. It's such a relief. One can't say that sort of thing to these barbarians out here—they might misunderstand one—so when one gets into civilized company, it just comes out."

"I see no reason why you should imagine me to be any more tolerant of effeminacy than your own colleagues."

Stanton bounced into the air. "Sorry, miss," he said in imitation of an elementary school-child's intonations, and again he began to giggle.

When Hanfield went up to his room to change, he thought once more of this Rose Pearsall. He tried to remember her, without success. Then he had an idea. He opened the trunk in which he kept his papers and his books and pulled out a whole pile of notebooks. He had been working on an incident recorded in the same notebook in which he would find any references to his last visit to Raini. Sitting on the bed, he set about deciphering the shorthand.

In the end, he thought he had found what he was looking for; but the entry was not helpful. "Bridge at the club. Bored." There followed a few comments, none of them about anyone with the name Pearsall. He was vexed by this failure of memory, and could only assume that there had been nothing in the least remarkable about the woman. All the time that he was dressing, he went over that far-distant visit of his. He re-created all the details; he remembered snatches of Stanton's conversation, his own shyness, the frowsty, unfashionable atmosphere of the club, the table stacked with back numbers of *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*, the food that he had eaten and the stakes for which he had played. Then it came to him.

"Do you mind if we only play for two annas a hundred?" There was a sympathetic murmur. She was a woman of about thirty, in a black lace dress, with an overblown artificial rose pinned at her shoulder. When she came into the card-room, he noticed how voices became suddenly hushed, and the Collector's wife went forward, and took her by the hand. Someone whispered to him that she was a young widow . . . tragic circumstances. . . . He could not catch the story. She moved in a subdued fashion and talked in a flat expressionless voice. "All right?" someone asked, and she put on a brave little smile.

When he was asked by the Collector to make up a four at bridge, he was surprised to find her as his partner. "I didn't really want to join in," she excused herself, as if she were ashamed to be playing cards after a bereavement, "but Mrs. Callendar insisted. She said it would be good for me."

The Collector's wife patted her hand. "Well, of course it will be good for you. You mustn't brood too much. I'm sure Jack wouldn't want you to brood."

"No, I mustn't brood," she concurred. "He always hated long faces."

Her subdued manner continued for two or three games. If she spoke at all, it was in that flat, controlled voice which told the company that here was a woman who was feeling deeply but would never show it. Then, gradually, there was a change. Although she played bridge without any skill whatsoever, she took Hanfield to task over some mistake he had made. She spoke to him rather bossily, and forgot her beautiful resignation. Then the Collector made one of his puns, and she began to giggle. It was an ugly, unattractive giggle, and it jarred, after her previous silence. Soon she was joking with him; her voice became louder, its old intonations were restored to it. She monopolized the conversation.

Hanfield now remembered the scene. He even remembered her appearance. The skin of her bare arms and neck was red and coarse, she had auburn hair, fluffed unprettily about her face, she wore glasses with transparent pink frames, her face was inexpertly powdered. Round her neck was a rope of large amber beads, and she wore a gold signet-ring with her initials intertwining on it: "R.S.P."

Hanfield frowned: then he began laughing once more. It was incredible. How could anyone have ever possibly thought that this woman was the original Rose Macheath? Rose Macheath, as he had imagined her, was a Circe, luring men to their doom; she was evil and beautiful, a sorceress, erect, terrible, stern. To substitute for the Rose of his imagination the Rose who looked like a games-mistress turned the story into a farce. He shrugged his shoulders; no, he would never understand these people.

When he went downstairs, Stanton was fussing over the dining-room table. "These flowers!" he exclaimed. "I wish I'd seen to them myself. No Indian seems to be capable of arranging flowers." His hands fluttered above the bowl. "I've got a hundred and one things to do. I must just go along to the kitchen. I can never trust the cook with the *Crème Brûlée*."

"Well, I'll leave you," Hanfield said. He went into the



drawing-room, and picked up one of the American magazines which Stanton had sent out to him.

Many minutes later, Stanton himself returned. "I'm really getting quite thrilled over this dinner-party. It's such a lark to have you and Rosie meet again. I only hope the sparks don't fly." In spite of this fervent wish, it was quite obvious that nothing would please him more.

"Do you expect a scene?"

"Oh no. You must trust me. I've been very tactful about whom I've asked. You see, the station has been divided over the Rosie question. Either you're pro-Rosie or you're anti-Rosie. It's the more stuffy people who are anti-Rosie; they won't have anything to do with her, they think she ought to have been hanged. The other lot——"

"Of whom you are one," Hanfield interposed.

"Of whom I am one—think that the poor woman has been punished quite enough already. They feel vaguely sympathetic towards her, they pity her, and to be quite frank, they think you a man of four letters for having given her away."

"I see. And I take it that you have invited an equal number of pro-Rosie-ites and anti-Rosie-ites, to make the party go?"

Stanton sniggered. "Oh, hardly," he deprecated, "As a matter of fact, they're all pro-Rosie."

"And anti-me?"

"Not seriously. They admire you no end, they think you damned clever. There'll be no unpleasantness."

"Thanks. It promises to be an amusing evening."

"That's what I thought. . . . Oh, but there *are* three people that I'm not quite sure about. A new D.I.G., his wife and daughter. I haven't yet had the opportunity to test them on the Rosie question. It will be interesting to see. Those senior people are always rather unkind about her."

The D.I.G. and his family were the first to arrive. He was a wizened, bald man, who said little; his wife said less. It was left to the daughter, a big-boned girl of eighteen whose face was innocent of make-up, to chatter to Hanfield. "I read your last book," she told him, adding with what she imagined to be charming candour: "I can't say that I liked it."

"Oh, didn't you?"

"I thought it so superficial. Of course it was competent—you



can't help being competent—but there was something lacking, I felt. It was so—so brittle.”

Hanfield pursed his lips in an effort to control his temper.

As the girl continued to converse to him in this amiable manner, other guests came in. They greeted him with a frigidity which left him in no doubt that they were pro-Rosie. His irritation with them, with the girl and, above all, with Stanton, who had arranged the evening, was mixed with a certain apprehension. He wondered what Rosie would look like, and what she would have to say to him.

Some of the guests had gone out on to the verandah, and it was from there that he first heard her name spoken. “Hello, Rosie!” he heard a young man exclaim. “I say! You do look smashing.” The reply, if there was one, was inaudible. Hanfield, who prided himself on his equanimity, felt a certain quickening of the pulse.

“Have they asked *her*?” The girl had broken off in the middle of her one-sided discussion of Hanfield’s books to stare out at the verandah. Then she turned to her mother: “Mum—it’s *her*. It’s Rosie Pearsall. Would you believe it?”

“What!”

“My God!” exclaimed the D.I.G. “I say, this is a bit thick.”

“But what are we to do?” his wife asked. “Are we to cut her?”

“No, no, no. Don’t be ridiculous. Best just to say how d’you do and take no more notice.”

The girl came back to Hanfield. “This must be a surprise for you,” she beamed.

“I knew about it already.”

“You did?” She was obviously disappointed.

In the hush that followed Hanfield noticed that everyone was staring either at him, or at the door which led in from the verandah. He pulled at his cigarette in an attempt at nonchalance, sipped his sherry, and looked about him. The girl was blushing, presumably at the delicacy of the situation, and had covered her cheeks with her hands.

The person who at last came through the door, followed by Stanton, made Hanfield gasp with surprise. What first struck him was the strange, greenish pallor of her skin. It was very smooth and quite innocent of any sort of make-up. She wore a green velvet frock, without jewellery, the neck and back cut away audaciously, the skirt full. He would not have believed

that it was the same person, but for certain facial resemblances. This woman took your breath away; she had great, tragic eyes, she never made an unnecessary movement, there was about her a dignity and pathos which brought a pang to the heart. That auburn hair which he had remembered, fluffed about her face, was now drawn back, straight and smooth, from a centre parting; it was glossy and burnished and accentuated the structure of her face.

She was Rosie Macheath as he had imagined her; it was thus that he had described her, never thinking that he would one day see her counterpart. The two famous actresses who had created Rosie on the stage and on the screen had seemed to him miraculously to have got their measure of her. In their own way, they had produced the ravaged dignity, the terrible composure with which Rosie bears the ruin of her hopes. But setting them against this apparition, he saw how artificial had been the figures that they had created. They seemed tawdry, melodramatic, a little cheap against this Rosie, the Rosie of his dreams.

She moved slowly towards him and extended a hand. Everyone was watching them, and, as he took the chill fingers, he could hear the girl next to him catch her breath. "I've been wanting to meet you again," Rosie said. She spoke in a low musical voice; he could not tell whether she was being malicious. There was a shadow of a smile on her lips.

For a brief while they faced each other, neither of them saying anything. Then she moved away from him. "We must talk, later," she said. She joined two young men at the other end of the room. Hanfield stared after her.

"Oo, I say!" exclaimed the girl at his elbow.

At dinner he and Rosie were separated by the whole length of the table. He had been placed next to the wife of the D.I.G., a plain, unfashionable woman, whose grey hair was drawn into a knot on top of her head; her arms were white and pricked with goose-flesh, she ate voraciously. Between courses she turned to him and said in a gruff voice: "It's a bit thick, isn't it?"

He raised his eyebrows interrogatively and she explained herself: "Fancy asking one to meet a person like that. I've never heard of such a thing." She continued in the same strain, the gist of it all being that this was the first time that she had ever sat down at table with a murderess and she hoped it would be the last.

But then she fell silent; and, at the same moment, Hanfield became aware that conversation all round the table had practically ceased. Everyone seemed to be listening, without wishing to appear to be doing so; and he caught furtive glances directed at the other end of the table. The girl with whom he had talked before dinner was unashamedly staring; she crumbled her bread in her fingers, and on her face there was a dreamy, far-off expression, as of someone under hypnosis.

They were all watching Rosie. He realized it, with a sharp twinge of jealousy; he was himself used to being lionized, stared at, listened to in these far-away stations where celebrities so rarely came. But to-night no one was bothering about him. Even the D.I.G.'s wife had turned away, her gaze fixed, with a mixture of disdain, fear and admiration, on the distant apparition.

Rosie herself seemed to be unaware of this fixed, hypnotic attention she received; or perhaps she had become so used to it that it no longer troubled her. She sat, very erect, between two young men of an almost exactly similar type; they both had healthy pink skins, white teeth and hair which curled obstinately in spite of a plastering of hair-oil. Their faces were stupid and babyish, they gave an impression of over-grown children out for a treat; Hanfield had met countless others like them, all up and down the country. They were attempting to flirt with Rosie, in a clumsy, schoolboy fashion; they kept on laughing boisterously, throwing back their heads, and their cheeks were red with embarrassment. She herself said little. She answered them in monosyllables, and all the time her eyes seemed to stray away from them and away from the dining-room, looking into some space inaccessible to the common gaze. On her lips there lingered the vestige of a smile, grim, faintly contemptuous, like a suppressed grimace.

Hanfield turned away abruptly. He, too, was becoming fascinated by her. He could not analyse wherein her attraction lay; sometimes he thought it was the great, haggard eyes or the erect carriage, sometimes the mysterious smile which twitched her lips. Certainly she dressed in striking fashion. He thought of the black lace dress which she had worn when he had last seen her, it had had long closely-fitting sleeves and there had been a pink slip underneath. It had been ugly and commonplace. But the green velvet gave her a queer attractiveness; it troubled one,

it gave an impression of malignancy, which was intensified by the pallor of her bare arms and throat and by the sheen of her hair.

After dinner, he waited for her to begin that "talk" which she had already promised him. She sat silent, her eyes fixed on the carpet; she did not seem to be listening to the conversation which went on around her, and when Stanton said something to her she only shrugged her shoulders. Then, at last, she rose and came across to the corner where Hanfield sat. Again there was that hush, as when they had first shaken hands together.

"Let's go out on to the verandah," she said. "We'll be alone there."

"The verandah? Won't it be rather cold at this time of night?"

Without answering, without even acknowledging that any objection had been made, she turned and made for the French windows. Hanfield followed after her.

There was a touch of frost in the air. From the opposite hillside lights gleamed through the darkness.

"Well?" he said.

She went to the rail and then turned and faced him. "I'm glad we've met again," she said. "I wanted to see what sort of person you were. When we played bridge that time, I—I hardly noticed you."

"Nor I you."

She drew her breath in sharply, but otherwise ignored his interruption. "I think you must be a magician," she said in her deep vibrant voice. "How did you know? How did you guess? It's rather frightening. Can you always read people like that? Is nothing hidden from you? We hardly met at all, and yet you looked into my heart, you knew all about me. It's uncanny. I can't understand it."

"And I can't understand you," he put in, with an amused chuckle. "What are you driving at? What are you getting out of all this?"

Again she ignored the interruption. "How did you know?" she repeated. "Tell me. You seemed to have seen everything as if you'd been there with us. There were a hundred and one little details. Do you remember how after they've—they've killed him she hears Alan weeping in the middle of the night, and she goes to him, and tries to console him? She puts her arms about

him, and she tries to make him take her, but he screams at her and abuses her, and in the end he strikes her. That really happened. That's how it was. He struck me in the mouth, and then he began sobbing again and I heard him say: 'See what you've brought me to. See what you've made me do.' " Her lips curled derisively. "He was such a gentleman, he'd been to a public school. To murder a man was one thing, but to strike a woman——!" She gave a low laugh, rather terrifying in the silence and the darkness and the absence of all other people. Her arms and throat gleamed and seemed to give off a subtle perfume, clouding his senses and making him feel foolish and a little dazed. "How did you know all that? How *could* you know? Everyone here thinks that I must have told you and that you then betrayed my confidence. But I never breathed a word. You got it all right; you made no slips. . . . That dreadful day when Alan first began to be unhappy about it all—I shall never forget your description. We were going through my—my husband's papers and we found the unfinished letter. He had written it to some friend of his, and in it there was so much about Alan—what a good assistant he was, and how he liked him, and he worked so hard and was so conscientious. . . . How *could* you have guessed? How *could* you?"

Hanfield stared at her for a moment. Her eyes seemed enormous in that light, they made him uneasy and he did not wish to look into them. "You must be off your head," he said. "Either that—or you're a shameless exhibitionist."

Then a strange thing happened, it was what he least expected. She began crying. She did not cover her face, but looked at him while the tears ran down her cheeks. "How can you say that to me—after all that I have suffered! Oh, I've been bad, I know I've been bad, but haven't I had sufficient punishment? And now I have to go on living with everyone knowing and despising me and hating me for what I am. If Alan were alive I think I could bear it. But even he is lost to me. I did it for him, you know; we were so much in love—he did love me, he did—and he thought that if we had the money we could get away and begin a new life. I still dream that we had escaped together, to some island in the South Seas. . . . Poor Alan! He was very young, and he was not very clever. Those two boys who were sitting by me at dinner somehow remind me of him." Her sobs redoubled. "I loved him," she gasped. "I loved him so much."



It was a magnificent performance, and, for a few seconds, Hanfield had felt a chill creep over him, while he wondered if in some inexplicable way his story about Rosie Macheath could ever actually have occurred. He thought that there might be some supernatural explanation; he might have dreamed it, there might have been a thought-transference. Listening to her, he was almost persuaded. But he was an experienced dramatist, he was a connoisseur of acting and something in her pose, some intonation of her voice, betrayed to him that what he was now witnessing was not a natural outburst of grief, but the best theatrical performance he had ever been privileged to attend. He stared at her in admiration. Every gesture, tone, glance was perfect; she was distorting the natural way in which one would say the words, almost imperceptibly, as every great actress must, in order to make the full effect on her audience without destroying the illusion of reality. But Hanfield's ear and his eye were too acute for her.

When she had finished he said: "Tell me one thing. How did you first get this idea? Did you think it out for yourself, or is Stanton responsible? It would amuse me to know. He has a way of dramatizing people, and it's quite possible that when he saw certain parallels between your story and my story—after all, like Rosie, you too lost your husband and a young man committed suicide—Well, it's quite possible that he began a whispering campaign. But in that case, if you'd been sensible, you could have sued him for libel. As it is, you've played his game as well as you know how."

She turned on him, her fists clenched. Angrily she exclaimed: "I don't know what you mean. I don't know how you can be so heartless. After all the suffering you've given me. . . ." The tears once more began to spill down her cheeks, while Hanfield watched entranced. He would remember this woman as he remembered Bernhardt and Duse and Mrs. Pat. "I'm so unhappy," she moaned. "I'm so unhappy! There's nothing left for me. Everyone hates me. What am I to do? What's to become of me?" Accusing him, she shouted: "I hate you! I hate you! You've ruined me! You've ruined my whole life."

"On the contrary, I believe I've made you. That was magnificent."

He had begun clapping; he could not help himself.



# MUSIC AND THE LITURGY

By

WILFRID MELLERS

THE twentieth-century composer who attempts to write a liturgical work has to face certain difficulties which, if they are not peculiar to our time, are aggravated by the nature of the world in which we live. We may presume that the composer writes such a work because he believes in, or at least approves of, the liturgy for which he creates music; and if he believes in his Church's liturgy he will be in favour of tradition and continuity, rather than of change. He will want his musical style to be based, broadly speaking, on what has been in his church an immemorial custom, because he believes that the liturgy deals with values that are in essence changeless and eternal.

Yet however sincere his personal conviction may be, he cannot escape the fact that the values which his community as a whole lives by are not the same as those of his Church. When Perotin in the thirteenth century, Machaut in the fourteenth, Dufay in the fifteenth, Palestrina in the sixteenth or Bach in the eighteenth wrote music for a liturgical function they did so because it was, if not the only, at least the most significant way of writing music known to them. Since the composer was the servant of the Church, to be a writer of music was inevitably to be a writer of liturgical music. In essentials the beliefs of the Church were accepted alike by the most powerful intellects and by those more or less incapable of thought. Therefore there could be no clear distinction between music that was written for liturgical purposes and that which was written for other purposes—apart from the most crudely functional kind of dance music, which was hardly regarded as artistic creation at all. This is why the technique of the secular madrigal differed in degree rather than in kind from the technique of the religious motet.

Even in the second half of the eighteenth century there was

still no fundamental distinction between the techniques of liturgical and of secular music. It is true that with the change in the centre of social gravity the secular style began to dominate the ecclesiastical, rather than the other way round. Yet people of the eighteenth century were convinced that if God had made man in His own image, they were justified in making Him in theirs; so Mozart wrote his church music in the style of Italianate opera because he thought that was the best way to compose music. He believed that if it pleased him and the liveliest and most sensitive among his contemporaries it would please God also, and he was probably right.

The gradual substitution, during the course of the nineteenth century, of Wagnerian egoism for belief in something outside oneself, whether it be called God or Reason or Truth or Nature, meant the abandonment of this communion between the secular and the liturgical. The characteristic technique of the nineteenth century, the sonata, depended essentially on the idea of conflict, and was thus antipathetic to liturgical expression; for the liturgical composer is trying, however imperfectly, to express not the fight of opposites but a unity that makes such oppositions meaningless. Thus in the nineteenth century liturgical music either ceased to be, in the deepest sense, liturgical—consider, for instance, the church music of Rossini or Gounod; or it became a deliberate exercise in pastiche, based on the style of an age when the writing of liturgical music was a natural activity—consider for instance the motets of S. S. Wesley. Of course there are exceptions to this. The great Verdi Requiem is at least as free from self-consciousness in its use of secular techniques as Mozart had been in his day; while Berlioz's Requiem and *Te Deum* seem to me genuinely liturgical in spirit though not in execution. Later, Bruckner's Masses and the Fauré Requiem are liturgical in both, and at the same time completely nineteenth century in style. None the less, as a general proposition the case may stand; and since the twentieth-century composer has musically, socially, and philosophically a nineteenth-century heritage the problem still exists, in some ways in a more acute form.

It is not, however, in every sense more acute; for there has been a tendency for the techniques of twentieth-century music to manifest some kind of reaction against the conflict theme of the nineteenth century—to experiment in techniques which, like

the monody of the Middle Ages, the fugal style of the sixteenth century, the division and variation techniques of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, depend on the principle of unity rather than on that of diversity. The case has, of course, philosophical implications, though we state it in purely musical terms, since we are interested at the moment in a technical consequence of it—in the fact that it has become more possible for composers to experiment with liturgical techniques of a traditional nature, without depriving their work of validity as the expression of a "twentieth-century mind." Even Stravinsky's mass is a re-creation of traditional techniques, though perhaps of so violent an order that its relation to the past cannot be obvious except to the musically very sophisticated. The most powerful examples I know of, of the re-creation of traditional techniques in a manner that will be intelligible equally to those who approach the works as contemporary music or as religious ritual, are the two masses, recently published, by Edmund Rubbra and Egon Wellesz.<sup>1</sup>

Rubbra's earlier mass, the *Missa Cantuariensis*, was written for the English liturgy in a style that could be called a reinterpretation of that of the English polyphonists of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. About the new work, the *Missa in honorem Sancti Dominici*, two points are immediately obvious; first, it is much shorter than the English mass, conceived more directly in liturgical terms; and, secondly, its style has as much in common with medieval music as it has with late Tudor polyphony. Rubbra remarked to me while writing the work that he had been astonished to discover what possibilities were still latent in fifths and fourths. His Latin mass is certainly evidence of this, for however traditional the elements of its technique, it is a work that no one but Rubbra could have created.

Unexpected relations between diatonic concords, produced by the movement of melodic parts, have always been a feature of Rubbra's music; in the mass this technique, as we can see from the opening of the Kyrie and still more the Agnus, attains a wonderfully poignant simplicity. The use of enharmonic progressions and of false relations is also developed in a more extreme form from sixteenth-century practice—the opening entries of the Benedictus are a striking instance. Yet the conception of line, with its plainsong-like contour and organum-like processions of

<sup>1</sup> *Lengnick*, 2s. 10d. and 3s. 4½d. respectively.

parallel fifths and fourths, is closer to medieval music than to late sixteenth-century polyphony; and this medieval quality is especially noticeable in what are perhaps the two most remarkable movements, the Sanctus and the Credo.

The opening of the Sanctus is the most beautiful passage in the work—an aetherial pentatonic dissolving of all four voices around a pivot-note, A. The simplest movement of the voice parts away from their pivot creates a strange harmonic shiver on the words "Dominus deus." The chord produced is in fact that known to the text-books as the German sixth, but no German sixth has ever before sounded as this one does, in its context. The Credo was the most difficult problem technically, and Rubbra has treated it in an almost entirely homophonic and declamatory manner. The unearthly oscillation between the bare fifth on E and the chords of F major and B major on the words "Filius Dei unigenitus" introduces the forbidden interval of the tritone with an effect that magically disturbs, but does not destroy, the music's tranquillity. The progression from the hollow fifths of the Incarnatus, through the Crucifixus to the Resurrexit, is treated without sectional contrasts, as a continuously flowing movement which gradually acquires more animated figuration, so that the technique is a very concentrated and simplified version of the method used by Rubbra in his symphonies. From the words "Et in Spiritum Sanctum" to the end, the ritualistic, impersonal awe of the text is stressed, by setting the words in a swaying seven-part organum. By such consistency of treatment Rubbra manages to make the form of the Credo musically satisfying, while preserving its effectiveness as ritual.

The tradition that Rubbra re-creates in his mass—broadly speaking that of Robert Fayrfax and the anonymous author of *O Quam Suavis*—is both English and European, for it was the tradition both of an English church and of a catholic community of nations. Wellesz's Mass in F minor belongs to a very different tradition, the elements of which had been derived from music that is not ecclesiastical at all. None the less this style too—the style of Schubert's and Bruckner's church music—became a European as well as a local convention, because of the dominating position which Vienna came to occupy in the world of music. A casual listener might dismiss Rubbra's mass, which derives its technique from a distant past, as pastiche; a casual listener might

dispose of Wellesz's mass, which evolves its technique from the immediate past, as an exercise in a fashion that is outmoded. But the use of a convention in itself proves nothing; all depends on how it is used. That Wellesz is not only a technical but also a spiritual descendant of Schubert and Bruckner is clear from all his work; in the same way that Rubbra's legacy from Fayrfax and Byrd cannot be discussed purely in terms of musical device.

Wellesz's mass, then, was written as a liturgical work for soli, chorus and organ in the Bruckner tradition, and is to-day regularly performed in Bruckner's church; to my mind, it demonstrates that the fashion is not outmoded, but very much alive. The opening of the Kyrie, the inexorable movement from the tenebrous F minor chords with their increasingly harsh incidental dissonances to the lyrical melody and resplendent C major of the *Christe*, is typical not only of the tradition but of Wellesz's instrumental work also, especially the two symphonies. It is true that the mass was composed at a time (1937) when most of Wellesz's instrumental music was less diatonic, more chromatic and complicated; the music he has written over the last few years, however, has in the main shown that the diatonicism of the mass was fundamental to Wellesz's thought, and not a deliberately assumed ecclesiastical manner.

The Sanctus and Benedictus are the movements which most clearly reveal the nature of Wellesz's re-interpretation of the convention. The Sanctus employs a floating, melting pentatonic melisma in the solo voices, such as we are familiar with from the composer's operatic work and (say) the last movement of the first Symphony. The Benedictus flows in a suave 6/4 pulse, fourths and fifths being subtly intermingled with the habitually richer harmony. Wellesz again follows Bruckner in making this rarefied, spiritual use of a highly emotional quasi-operatic technique; we may mention also in this connection the hushed declamation and fluctuating harmonies of the *Quoniam* of the Gloria.

The Credo uses a more expansive and sectional technique than does Rubbra. Wellesz too sets the *Incarnatus* unaccompanied, in processions of oddly related diatonic concords; but the *Crucifixus* and *Resurrexit* introduce a more instrumental type of line and something of the acrid harmonic power which characterizes Wellesz's chamber music. The treatment of the dotted rhythm



in the organ part of the Agnus may also be related to instrumental and secular aspects of Wellesz's work; it conveys a taut intensity which, at the words "dona nobis pacem," impressively dissolves into rocking triplets and a clear F major. The conclusion is serenely diatonic, of Schubertian directness.

Both the Wellesz and the Rubbra masses are relatively easy to perform, though the Rubbra presents some problems of intonation. They prove that liturgical music can still be written which is important contemporary music and also efficient at fulfilling its ritualistic function. We may be permitted at least to hope that the day may come when not all but most of the liturgical music of the Church will once more be written by contemporary composers, and will be of a standard at any rate not far short of these two works.

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## BROADCASTING

LAST month I referred to the unique character of our Third Programme and its distinction among all the broadcasting services of the world. It is insidiously easy for all of us as listeners to come quickly to take for granted any achievement to our advantage, however much toil, sweat and nerve-taxing persistence has been expended in driving it over (or through) internal obstacles and resistances, however many professional reputations have been hazarded in the endeavour, or however vulnerable its foundations may be to the illwill of malice or ignorance. The influence of broadcasting, to remain healthy, must be a two way traffic. When a listener recognizes the value of a single programme, or of a collective policy such as the Third Programme, it is no less than a moral obligation for him to offer its creators the benefit of his critical appreciation or encouragement. It should be understood that *intelligent* letters about programmes do carry considerable weight in the B.B.C. (particularly, of course in the Third Programme) for they are rare. It is the old story, those who have something to say seldom bother to write. They may not think it is worth their while. But it undoubtedly is, for the Third Programme (with every other ambitious venture in the B.B.C.) needs *active* support. There are certain "radio critics" of daily newspapers who



are on the alert to arouse popular prejudice against the Third Programme for the purpose of using the publicity as a pair of stilts; and each positive response from listeners is ammunition in the hands of Third Programme organizers when they have to give battle in defence of their policy. The kind of response that is needed is far from mere praise and approval. This service must maintain communications with listeners who not only appreciate its enormous social significance, but also are quick to detect lapses from the high initial standards it set itself, if these standards are to gain strength and develop.

Because it is, in theory at least, uniquely eclectic, the Third can succeed or fail more fully than a programme restricted to the narrow range of popular appeal. Lately it has shown a tendency to fail by being afraid of failure. It has not yet committed itself to the pursuit and mastery of one most elusive prize, an adequate technique of presenting broadcast controversy, without which no school of broadcasting can be said to have reached maturity. The recent prolonged exchanges between Professor A. J. Ayer and Father F. C. Copleston were a painful, but, if conclusive, not a wasted demonstration of the dead hand which the prepared script lays upon spoken disputation. Neither Professor Ayer nor Father Copleston is an actor and neither, I believe, would claim that he was qualified to invest his readings with an artificial substitute for natural, spontaneous vitality. Consequently the meeting of these two philosophers at the microphone was almost redundant, for their generative psychological vigour was sterilized by the conditions. The listener rightly felt that he was being humbugged, since nothing that either reader was rapidly enunciating could have the slightest effect upon the prepared reply which his opponent was patiently waiting to deliver in his turn. It was not thus, with tamed and edited script in hand, that Abelard, Duns Scotus and Matthew of Aquasparta stirred up the wits of their contemporaries. Let out of Bocardo and given freedom of tongue, these present philosophers of ours, Logical Positivists and Thomists alike, could stir and counter-stir to some purpose.

The need to develop the almost unexplored resources of "unscripted" broadcasting is not confined to the Third Programme. Home and Light have their own breeds of tonic controversy to rear; the various "quiz" programmes, the glorified parlour games and "The Critics"—the liveliest effort so far—are the merest one syllable efforts with the alphabet of the possibilities. Of course mature results need not be expected to appear overnight like mushrooms. A generation raised on the diluted small-beer of utilitarian intercourse need not be expected to take flight and soar as easily; the number of men who, under pressure, can sustain a line of argument and meet objections to it, without reference to notes, in pure and vigorous English is very small.

The B.B.C. has the means of exercising and increasing this number and perhaps thereby accelerating a renaissance of the spoken word. It may even be that we shall have cause to thank the Corporation for endowing our grand-children with the voices, if not of angels, at least of Englishmen who speak and understand English.

One subject that has been conspicuously neglected by the Third Programme is the Cinema. Presumably the organizers are aware of the strong fermentations of art that have been taking place in the European films since the end of the war; yet, apart from rare and unrelated programmes like the recent resourceful adaptation of Robert Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* the Cinema has been as neglected as if the sum of its performance was only million dollar song and dance drolleries.

Now nobody needs to be told that there is a mountainous and growing slag heap of unspeakably bad films; but there is a no less prodigious manufacture of printed trash and its existence is not used as an argument for the suspension of serious literary criticism. The film does suffer, even at its highest flights, in the estimation of sluggish, provincial minds, from being a contemporary art-form. So, the Third Programme might remember, does broadcasting.

It is not very charitable to give a listener with a taste for eighteenth century music nothing one night and Mozart on the Third Programme played simultaneously with Handel and Bach on the Home Service the next. This happened last month. It is also an obvious case of waste for a potential total of listeners to both concerts were being unwillingly divided and frustrated. It should be possible to have a better inter-service liaison in the planning of programmes without the independence of the respective groups being diminished.

Next month I will consider the functional relationships of the Home and Light Services to the Third and to each other.

JOHN McCONNELL.

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## REVIEWS

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

*Gerard Manley Hopkins. A study of poetic idiosyncrasy in relation to poetic tradition. Volume Two*, by W. H. Gardner (Martin Secker & Warburg 30s).

A GOOD deal of incompetent and even unfair criticism has been showered upon Hopkins; that he should have found Dr. Gardner as his outstanding critic and interpreter more than compensates for this. It is now about fifteen years since Dr. Gardner made his debut as a Hopkins scholar with what probably still ranks first among his writings, his essay on *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. Five years ago appeared as "a centenary commemoration" the first volume of the book under review. It contained, besides the essay just mentioned, chapters dealing with the conflict between Hopkins's vocation as a priest and as a poet, with the diction, the imagery and themes of his poems, rounded off with a most fascinating account of what critics and poets had said of and done with Hopkins. The second volume, recently published, opens with a shortish yet able sketch of the background of the poet's life, after which it falls into two parts: Tradition and Innovation, Maturity and Achievement. The first part covers the ground from the very first beginnings of Hopkins's poetic activity as a schoolboy up to the time when he broke his self-imposed poetic silence of seven years' duration. It presents a picture of the growth of the young poet: an interesting picture no doubt, but since Hopkins emerged in 1875 as an altogether different and highly original poet, relatively unimportant. Another chapter deals with Hopkins as reader and critic, not the strongest part of a very strong book, containing little beyond what is contained in the various volumes of letters. Dexterously placed between these two chapters that constitute lighter fare, is Dr. Gardner's thorough study of Sprung Rhythm. No reader who seriously tackles this part of the book can fail to appreciate the devotion and application that went into the making of this exposition of a very difficult subject. The way in which Dr. Gardner has shirked no difficulties in tracing sprung rhythm, not only in modern English verse, but also in Old and Middle English, in various Greek measures, most of all in Welsh, is wholly admirable: it is a work done once for all. Reading these chapters any critic should beware of such a rash judgement as: "it is regrettable that so much fine scholarly work should have been spent on a cause unworthy of it," where the cause stands for tracing the connection between the poet's idiosyncrasy and poetic tradition. To be taken up and down the whole field of English litera-

ture, with an occasional outing into Greek, Latin, French, even Spanish and Italian literature and slight excursions into the arts of painting and music, constantly to be brought into contact with the choicest minds in the course of centuries, repeatedly to have new light shed upon a line from Hopkins, is most exhilarating. It is in no way regrettable to have the intricacies of sprung rhythm elucidated by similar rhythmic patterns elsewhere. That the above criticism came from the pen of the present reviewer makes no difference. It does not mean, however, that Dr. Gardner's findings carry complete conviction. No matter how individual a poet Hopkins is, he could not possibly free himself from the influence of other poets. No poet was ever dropped from the sky. This would amount to maintaining that Hopkins was no man, no Englishman, no English poet. But just as it is impossible not to undergo poetic influences, so it is impossible to point out these influences in the case of a major poet (as Dr. Gardner admits that Hopkins is, in a well-founded survey of major and minor poetry in the epilogue to his book) who said of himself that the effect of reading great works of art was to admire them and to make him do otherwise (*Letters to Bridges*, p. 291). A cherished form of criticism is to relate a poet to his predecessors and to describe his poetry in such terms as Tennysonian ring, Wordsworthian suggestion, Miltonic strain, harking back to the Metaphysicals, a touch of Blake and a reminiscence of Keats, etc. We grant that this may be legitimate in any criticism of a minor poet, indeed often the only way possible. In the case of a major poet, so many other equally or more potent influences have been at work, influences which range from all the poet's prose readings down to such unfathomable, easily overlooked but nevertheless often most decisive factors as the first nursery rhymes beautifully spoken by his mother and the warm conviction with which a master first opened the boy's eyes and ears to the beauties of verse. Besides, however numerous and varied these influences, the true poet transcends them all in the sense that his talented personality succeeds in integrating them in his "self." When we learn how Hopkins hated the idea of schools in poetry and how almost comical is his detestation of "echoes"—a disease he called them—one's attitude towards such influences, affinities, etc., should be at least very guarded. Thus it is that, truly admiring the two chapters of Dr. Gardner on rhythm, we yet have our doubts if and how far these various influences have been active. The one text that we should most like to argue from is that sprung rhythm is so eminently natural a thing (*Letters to Bridges*, p. 163). In other words, in our opinion Hopkins had ringing in his ears a new rhythm, indefinite and yet very marked; when he took to learning Welsh and discovered the rhyme and rhythm of Welsh poetry, he was struck by it because it had long been humming in his

head. Dr. Gardner is too great a scholar not to see this possibility, even though he does not mention it as explicitly as when he is speaking of the *strengthening* influence of Hopkins's reading of the cywyddwyr on his natural tendency towards syntactical freedom (p. 157). But here and throughout the book Dr. Gardner in our opinion overstresses the traditional element, sometimes with a promptness which is anything but convincing. When in speaking of the poem "Spring and Fall"—which incidentally has as its theme not the inevitability of death but the inevitable transitoriness of youth—it is stated that the underthought is derived from Isaiah, our reaction is: possibly, but very hard if not impossible to prove. There is a very marked similarity between "et ad Te nostras etiam rebelles compelle propitius voluntates" (Secret of the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost) and:

Yet the rebellious wills

Of us we do bid God bend to him even so. (*Poems*, 3rd ed. No. 70).

More than affinity cannot be deduced from it, even though we know that Hopkins was well acquainted with this prayer. Theoretically Dr. Gardner allows room for "coincidence" (p. 98) but in practice he appears to be too bold in detecting echoes, influences, etc. This does not mar his book; on the contrary, it makes it fascinating reading. But we doubt if the reader gains by it that insight into the poet which the author intends. Where we are again at one with Dr. Gardner is in one of his summings-up: "Gathering and retwining so many strands of the European poetic tradition, Hopkins was a great eclectic who was also eminently creative and original. The total complex of his style is (to use his own expression) a poetic 'species'; as such it can never recur—except by shameless imitation (p. 370)."

The second part, Maturity and Achievement, is divided into three sections: the poems of nature and God, written by Hopkins as a theologian and in the first year of his priesthood; poems of God and man, pointing to the priest who found in his profession enough subjects to write on; and poems of desolation and recovery, written in Dublin when Hopkins went through bitter sufferings. Those who years ago enjoyed the essay on *The Wreck of the Deutschland* will only find it natural to hear that in giving the exegesis of these poems Dr. Gardner is at his very best. He has numerous pleasant surprises in store for the reader as, with evident zest, he opens eye and ear to the "freshness deep down" of these poems. The way in which he lays bare the delicate yet vigorous craftsmanship of Hopkins, cleverly concealed behind most intricate and most unobtrusive patterns of rhyme and rhythm, is beyond praise. Yet Dr. Gardner is no blind worshipper at Hopkins's shrine. His judgement is always scholarly and well balanced because he never sunders the poem from the poet. In a highly



individualistic personality like that of Hopkins it is no mean performance to succeed in displaying the poem as the very distinctive expression of that inmost "self" which the poet was at such pains to express. That the success is not in every way complete, in no way detracts from the merits of Dr. Gardner, who was at a considerable disadvantage, being neither a Jesuit nor a priest. For we have to note a shortcoming not dissimilar to the one we pointed out above. There Dr. Gardner slightly overlooked the important fact that in Hopkins all traditional and external influences became "fused," to use Hopkins's own word, by and in his powerful and original personality. Here in our opinion he tends to overlook the intrinsic unity of this "self," of his "forged feature." We get the impression that Hopkins was composed of a number of opposites. There is personality and character, the extravert and introvert, the ascetic and aesthete, moral duty and natural inclination, priestly claims and neurotic tendencies, etc., causing conflicts, friction, clashes, disharmony. This often makes for a somewhat strained exegesis of certain poems, which we are sure Hopkins himself would be startled to hear. We do not deny that there is some truth in what Dr. Gardner states; after all, Hopkins experienced the struggle of the flesh against the spirit as any other man. But has not the way in which Hopkins was talked of and analysed by the critics in the 'thirties influenced Dr. Gardner's approach to Hopkins's personality? We think that his angle of vision is not entirely right and that for this reason he never quite focussed Hopkins. In his first volume we read: "Only by an earnest and profound reconciliation of the claims of body and soul, imagination and spirit, could such a man find ease in the otherwise too rigorous bonds of moral duty" (p. 18). In the second volume we read the following: ". . . yet in spite of the limitations imposed on his intellectual activity by dogma, vows and personal qualms, his letters show a considerable range of thought. . . ." (p. 32). The objectionable expressions are "bonds" and "limitations." Dogma is no more a limitation than truth itself: both, being the same, will set us free (John. 8:32). Moral duty, no more than the ten commandments, is a restriction of man's liberty; on the contrary, he who does not do his duty, is a slave, no free man at all (John. 8:34). This Christian paradox does not negate the fact that man's life here on earth is *militia*. But to understand this conflict, one should approach it from the true *freedom* gained by freely *subjecting* oneself to Christ. If it is explained in terms of a free man falsely thinking his imaginary freedom assailed and threatened by the demands of religion and religious life, the resulting picture will be out of perspective and distorted. Dr. Gardner's understanding of Hopkins's religion, and to a lesser extent of his religious life, prevents distortions (a very fine example is given on p. 330); but we do not believe that he sees Hopkins



in true perspective, nor do we blame him for it: that would be most unjust. There is still need of a portrait of Hopkins, the religious man and the priest; this portrait should bear out the inestimable moulding power with which Almighty God Himself through the instrumentality of The Spiritual Exercises, perhaps by hacking and hewing, made Hopkins highly "served" and so highly one.

W. A. M. PETERS

### WHAT IS IRISH VERSE?

*The Course of Irish Verse*, by Robert Farren (Sheed & Ward 8s 6d). *Contemporary Irish Poetry*, edited by Robert Graecen and Valentin Iremonger. (Faber & Faber. 8s 6d).

MR. FARREN'S purpose is to show "the course of Irish poetry in the English language; to observe and remark upon the growth in Irishness, in separate existence from English poetry, of the poetry that was and is composed in Ireland or by Irishmen." Speaking as himself an Irish poet who writes in English, he tells us, "We believe in literary separatism not because it is separatism but because it is the habit of all healthy nations." Unfortunately the question is not quite so simple as that, nor is Mr. Farren's critical procedure likely to impress even those who most strongly desire to see a specifically Irish literature.

Two things strike one at once about the critical procedure. Firstly, that in his eagerness to establish an Irish reaction against English verse in style and subject-matter he gives the impression of being reactionary in the bad sense of the word: for so I should describe his implication that the English language can at this time be used as if Eliot and Pound had never written in it. Secondly, that his habit of digging out something to say about the least interesting minor poets simply because they are Irish is uncomfortably reminiscent of the worst kind of Ph.D. thesis. Several quotations will indicate this latter characteristic; for instance,

In 1808 . . . Moore began publishing his *Irish Melodies*, and in two or three of these, for the first time, an important poet was influenced by Gaelic song. . . .

The suggestion is that Moore was "important" quite apart from his being influenced by Gaelic song, and this is a suggestion that needs defending. And when, quoting Callanan's *Lament*:

Gone, gone is the beauty of fair Innisfail,  
For the stranger now rules in the land of the Gael—

he speaks of its "grave, strong speech," one can only suppose that once again the critical faculty has succumbed to national feeling. Such an impression is confirmed by journalistic phrases like "... the fey-gay treble of Allingham's *Up the Airy Mountain*."

But every now and then Mr. Farren remembers that he is not writing a Ph.D. thesis, and the result is an exercise in Stage Irishry which must appal anyone with a real concern for the reputation of Ireland and Irish literature; here he is talking about James Stephens:

While the consternated got confidence, what of the few who had welcomed him molars and all? How did *The Hill of Vision* count with them? They'd been sure he was no mudlark laying slap-bangs on tram-tracks, to pop poor passengers' aesthetic hearts against their poetic palates; quite the contrary, they'd known him for the least-to-be-doubted variety of poet: the man with the load of wisdom; the man with the mind like floodlights; the man who lit up hole and corner, and grass-grown hillside, and sea, soul and salamander, with eyes like headlamps. . . .

However, perhaps Mr. Farren is concerned to prove that, as he says, extravagance is one of the Irish characteristics. I do not find his allocation of "characteristics" very cogent: extravagance, quick variation in mood, ferocious satire, preoccupation with the weather, religious sense, and "religious care for finesse in one's craft"—all these are to be found in English poetry, and in any case such inventories are clumsy and not very helpful and perhaps even dangerous. Certainly the practice does not prepare us to accept Mr. Farren's summing-up—"Irish poetry on the whole, and certainly in its better part, is decidedly Irish. This book has made clear what I suggest by the epithet."

Poetry, in whatever language, must be closely related to the life of its time, interpreting the word "life" in the widest possible sense. The difference between the poetry of different countries will be mainly a difference of language; each language possesses what we call its own "spirit," its peculiar advantages and disadvantages. Other factors distinguishing one nation's poetry from another will be, perhaps, the predominant way of life (for example, agricultural or industrial; but to-day, whether we like it or not, the most significant poetry appears to be the poetry of the city, directly or indirectly), and local natural or human institutions. Local spiritual characteristics should be mentioned here, but one must add that the general spreading of a more or less standardized education, easier transport, modern business methods and so on have all tended to soften national distinctions, and that the essential part of these will in any case be evinced as distinguishing qualities of language.

The question facing Irish poets who intend to be Irish as well as

poets is therefore very difficult. Anglo-Irish, in spite of Synge, is not a separate language: it cannot evade the implications of "Standard English." The theory of importing Gaelic rhythms into verse written in English—a theory which figures prominently in Mr. Farren's book (he finds them first of all in Moore's "passionate, melancholy, dignified and gleeful songs")—is to say the least dubious; and its practice, judging by Mr. Farren's examples, is as yet not impressive. You cannot have rhythm without words, and I am not convinced that you can have Gaelic rhythms without Gaelic words. Certainly you cannot have innovation in rhythm without a corresponding innovation in language. Quoting Moore's poem which begins

To Ladies' eyes around, boy,  
We can't refuse, we can't refuse . . .

Mr. Farren makes the preposterous claim,

It is difficult, too, not to see in *To Ladies' Eyes* a rapider whirling and glinting of the dagger of rhythm than one is used to in English poetry . . .

But the sentiment, the language, of the poem is so completely that of the Georgian drawing-room that only the most resolutely prescient ear can detect the "voice of Gaeldom" breaking into the English language.

The only sound method would seem to be to write in Gaelic, a language which in the past has acquitted itself magnificently in poetry. But there are obvious reasons for the reluctance which Irish poets feel towards using Gaelic. Apart from the consequent loss of the British and international public, there is the more important question of whether a language whose development has been so seriously disrupted can be utilized as a vehicle for contemporary themes without some strain or artificiality. A superficially similar case is that presented by Arabic poetry, still predominantly written in the classical language which has not changed for thirteen centuries. As the language of the Koran, it is considered the direct word of God, and has therefore been preserved sacrosanct against the mutations of time. Life, however, has not enjoyed the same protection, and consequently a colloquial language has sprung up to contend with everyday existence, totally distinct from the classical language which is still considered proper to poetry. The outcome is that poetry plays a remarkably small part in modern Arabic life: it is, more explicitly than elsewhere, a special study, a vaneer, a luxury, an escape, a sedative. One may fear that poetry written in Gaelic might suffer a similar fate, might become a stagnant pool left behind by the moving tides of European literature, preoccupied with some narrow traditional themes just as classical

Arabic poetry to-day is still preoccupied with roses, music, perfumes and the languors of love.

What should the Irish writer do, then? Simply write in the language which best suits his intention (assuming that his intention already suits his talent, of course), as did Yeats and Joyce. These are great Irish writers, but they were writers before they were Irish, and indeed the more deliberately Irish Yeats was, the less successful was his poetry by any *literary* standards. "I might have found more of Ireland if I had written in Irish, but I have found a little, and I have found all myself." What I wish to suggest is that to mention Moore as "an important poet" in a course of verse which includes Yeats is to betray an ignorance of values. It reminds one of the village art show—the local amateurs displaying their efforts alongside the great artist who happens to live there. The implication of Mr. Farren's book is that we ought to apply special standards to Irish verse, standards noticeably laxer than those we apply to English poetry. In speaking of Mangan Mr. Farren is almost explicit:

For, taken simply as a poet he is more than good; while, taken as an Irish poet he is first for three-quarters of his century.

Moore, Allingham, even Stephens: if these poets, who feature so insignificantly in English verse, really figure as importantly in the history of Irish poetry as Mr. Farren suggests, then one can only suppose that Irish poetry as Mr. Farren conceives it is a frail, half-starved, provincial little creature. Can it be that these small fry of the English river are the big fish in the Irish stream? Mr. Farren tackles his subject with a conspicuous lack of humour, and the sight of his serious domestic jaws, champing away at figures, dates, modes and rhythms, will I fear only give cause for further amusement to those who "laugh with foreign jaws."

I can see nothing that is specifically Irish in most of the poems included in *Contemporary Irish Poetry*, an anthology of verse written for the most part since the death of Yeats; it is, apart from the higher proportion of Irish place-names and dialect words such as "gombeen-men," simply another collection of modern verse; if anything, rather less interesting than most. If Padraic Fallon's vivid poem, *Rastery's Dialogue with the Whiskey*, is discernibly Irish, it is because of its subject-matter, its extravagance and its rhetoric—qualities which the Ascendancy and the "laughers with foreign jaws" had long ago proclaimed to be "Irish."

I am not blaming these writers for not being more Irish (as I suspect Mr. Farren might); on the contrary, this volume seems to me to indicate the vanity of Mr. Farren's demand for a separate Irish poetry.

As I have suggested, the hands of Eliot and Pound are laid too heavily on modern English for any regional reaction which does not take cognisance of them to appear as anything but reactionary. And one might notice that Eliot, *as innovator*, is far from being an entirely "original" poet—he has his links with an English past—while Mr. Farren, if I understand him aright, would ask of his Irish innovators that they base themselves either on nothing at all or else on an ancient and discontinuous tradition of poetry written in another language.

The young poets represented in this anthology are part and parcel of what we had better call "contemporary writing in English," and the criticisms one would bring against them are exactly those one would bring against, say, *Poetry London*. They have associated themselves with what has already become a kind of literary tradition, already become a stale tradition. One would advise them not to try to be more Irish, but to try to be less "of the movement," more precise in their writing, less susceptible to the slick metaphor, less wordy, less loosely portentous. The usual influences are to be detected, sometimes too easily; Hopkins in

Reins wring the rathe frame, the eager passions goad,  
augur of love; and the blaze and the burst of it  
rage in the common race and coupling of blood . . .

The later Eliot, almost parodied, in

Rose of silence, rose of death  
Coiled in the darkness of tongue and breath  
Rose of darkness, rose of fire  
Coiled in the interminable, indestructible hour.

As in most similar collections the fashionable poetic circumlocutions are to be found here:

. . . The oil of joy press motion in the wheels of love

and

Strict hairshirt of circumstance wears the flesh  
On delicate bones . . .

There is the stereotyped phrasing, the modern "poetic diction," of

. . . away from the wild  
And unvalled waste of wish, the zigzag tracks,  
The wilful freaks and fractures of habit,  
The staccato acts of insurrection,  
The guilty bed, the naked bathe . . .



And there is the metaphor which will not stand the strain of a second and closer look—as for instance,

Years of counter and office, the warped mesh  
Of social living, dropping on stones,  
Wear down all that was rough and worthy  
To a common denominator of dull tones—

which hardly bears out Mr. Farren's hint that "religious care for finesse in one's craft" is an Irish characteristic.

I think that these poets are to be praised for what we might call their "Europeanism," their refusal to hide under a provincial hedge. One poet begins thus:

In Ireland now, at autumn, fringed by war,  
We banish Europe with each bolted door  
And night-slammed window, huddling into the past . . .

But in the poem which follows he is at least looking out into Europe through that window. What is to be objected to, perhaps, is the slack form which their Europeanism takes; so many of these poems start arbitrarily, and their ends are by no means a rounding-off of experience. Even the most obviously planned poem loses itself in impreciseness: sometimes so quickly that one feels the impreciseness to be deliberate—a dangerous practice for almost every kind of poet, and especially for the young poet. As a result, a solid reading of this anthology is likely to have an unhappy effect on the mind, which is left in confusion, full of loose ends, hanging phrases, voices that are just a little too remote to be heard distinctly, and lights that, like neon advertisements, fade out just as one is about to read them. Indeed, the book sends one back to Mr. Farren's "Irish Melodies" with something approaching eagerness: Moore, after all, Irish or not Irish, had few pretensions, and he did take care with his work.

D. J. ENRIGHT

### HOMAGE TO EZRA POUND

*The Pisan Cantos*, by Ezra Pound (Faber & Faber 12s 6d).

THE poetry and criticism of Mr. Pound's later life have been embittered by a long quarrel with England. "We speak a language that was English," he wrote in *How to Read*; and, "there is no present reason to think of England at all." "Anything that happens to mind in England has usually happened somewhere else first." "The decline of England began on the day when Landor packed his trunks and left for Tuscany." In 1932, "the sense that the country is ill because

it can comprehend neither the revolution of the word nor the rectification of the word, is still alien to English sensibility." Mr. Pound often exaggerates, but that is because he is intoxicated by the truths he discovers. It is true that, among living writers in English, only Mr. Pound and Mr. Eliot, two Americans, have felt as a part of their poetic inspiration the conscious anxiety to revivify language: only in their work do we find a constant striving and achievement in certain new forms. Both these writers owe this quality in their work to their sense of European literature as a whole, and they owe that sense to their American origins. In this particular Europeanized American sensibility to language and form they resemble Henry James and have continued his tradition.

But the usefulness of Mr. Eliot, like the usefulness of Henry James, has consisted in his ability to come to terms with England. Even if we prefer not to measure literature by its salutary powers, it must be admitted that those two writers, who were able to dwell industriously in England, achieved a varied and harmonious development, while Mr. Pound, self-exiled in France and Italy, has often seemed to gesticulate wildly and lose himself in his own convictions. England is after all a part of Europe, and to try to suppress the English tradition in one's literary consciousness—however exasperated that consciousness, as an American's may often be—is to deprive a "sense of Europe" of one of its essential instruments. Mr. Pound's temperament, or the particular decade of his initiation, or both, or other factors we cannot know, may account for his estrangement between the wars. Whatever the process, it coincided with the falling apart of Europe itself in the 'twenties and 'thirties, and was perhaps inevitable. But Mr. Pound in these latest Cantos implies a partial recantation. Held by the American Army in a prison camp in Pisa in the last months of the war, awaiting trial as a traitor for his wartime propaganda in Italy, he evokes the tradition he values as he first came to know it; and he came to know it first, or most effectively, in England. He remembers the London of 1908 or so (and of course, the Paris),

before the world was given over to wars  
 Quand vous serez bien vieille  
     remember that I have remembered,  
 mia pargoletta,  
     and pass on the tradition  
 there can be honesty of mind  
     without overwhelming talent  
 I have perhaps seen a waning of that tradition . . . (LXXX).

These Cantos are unified by the meditation on what is left, for "a



## THE RELIGION OF WILLIAM BLAKE

*English Blake*, by Bernard Blackstone (Cambridge University Press, 25s).

THIS study is an attempt to consider "Blake's position in English Thought." Mr. Blackstone has no wish to add another volume to the many books "written to trace his sources back to the Cabbala, the alchemists, Jakob Boehme, and Emanuel Swedenborg." He insists that "Blake called himself English Blake, and from first to last he lived and worked within an English context of thought and society." Here the author seems to place himself with Geoffrey Keynes<sup>1</sup> and against W. P. Wicutt<sup>2</sup> and Ellis in the controversy over Blake's ancestry; for according to the opposite theory he should really be known as "Irish Blake," and referred to as Liam O'Neil, not William Blake at all. However this may be, it is important that Mr. Blackstone has chosen to set about his task by assessing the intellectual climate of England in Blake's time and Blake's own reactions to it. This is obviously the right approach, considering that the violence of Blake's thought and the extremes to which he would go, clearly spring from the revulsion he experienced away from so many current doctrines. In justice to other critics though, one should point out that the alternative method, of pursuing Blake's sources, is not by any means played out. And his symbolism is still very imperfectly understood.

Mr. Blackstone divides his treatment of Blake's reactions to his own age into a study of his life and one of his thought. It is a pity that the recent appearance of a reprint of Mona Wilson's *Life of Blake* should make much of the first part seem redundant. But he has some original contributions to make. The most striking is his interpretation of Catherine Blake, the poet's wife. Other critics, notably Mr. Middleton Murry, have detected signs of a conflict between the couple in Blake's work. But none has dared to attack Catherine in the way that Mr. Blackstone does. "A man who was a 'mental prince' had to live hour by hour with a woman who could not sign her name when she married him and never came to show signs of developing intelligence. A fervent believer in free love found himself under the effective domination of a narrow-minded jealousy. The story is writ large in the lyrics and the symbolic works."

Now, in his remarks about Mrs. Blake's intelligence, Mr. Blackstone is not strictly accurate. Catherine helped her husband in the processes of etching, coloured some of the illuminated books, and, according to Gilchrist, even completed some of Blake's designs after

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliography of William Blake*, 1921, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> *Blake, a Psychological Study*, 1946.

his death. Indeed, it became the fashion, as Geoffrey Keynes shows,<sup>1</sup> to ascribe any weakness in William's work to Catherine, rather as the weaknesses in Shakespeare's work are sometimes palmed off on other Elizabethan dramatists. And if the portrait of Blake at the age of twenty-eight, which illustrates Mona Wilson's *Life*, is correctly ascribed to Catherine, she must have been gifted. She certainly came to possess the visionary faculty, like her husband, if Gilchrist is right. But perhaps it would have been better if her talents had developed more along their own lines. As it was, she became Blake's wife while she was young and impressionable, without any preconceived notions from a formal education. She followed her "Mr. Blake" with implicit trust, was moulded by his doctrines, and only stood out against them when her innate sense of right and wrong, the kind of instinct for truth which very simple people often have, was offended.

Blake might have gained greatly from a mate who had something to teach as well as to learn. If he could have accepted the Christian view of marriage, this would have been very well, but there are no signs that Blake could tolerate the amount of "give and take" that this requires. He never seems to have fully grasped the idea that woman was created because she had something original to contribute. The nearest he gets is in his doctrine of the "Emanation" as opposed to the "Spectre," but this is contradicted in the theories on the Creation of Eve which he adapted from Boehme and in his dogma: "In Eternity Woman is the Emanation of Man; she has no Will of her Own. There is no such thing as a Female Will, and Queens" (*Visions of the Last Judgement*).

Blake's concept of heaven is to some extent influenced by his ideas about the feminine vocation. There is a lengthy disquisition on Eternity at the beginning of *Milton*, Book Two. Round Eden itself stretches "Beulah," a moony habitation which is "from Great Eternity a mild and pleasant Rest." There dwell the Emanations, who are too weak to sustain the "great Wars of Eternity," and who tend those "Sons of Eden" who are in need of a rest from their exertions. Thus Blake's Heaven is a completely Activist State, consisting in mental warfare, in the creative fury. It is, in fact, a sort of super Valhalla, with a Moslem Paradise in the background. This contempt for the Passive makes him place it in Beulah, where is also to be found a collection of quietists,<sup>2</sup> including, amazingly, St. Teresa. Samuel Palmer tells us that when he knew Blake, he "was fond of the works of St. Teresa and often quoted them." But this was when he was engaged on the *Inventions to the Book of Job* and the Dante illustrations. It is unlikely that Blake could have so misinterpreted the "undaunted daughter of desires" if he had known her well while still composing the prophetic books. At any

<sup>1</sup> *Blake Studies*, 1949, "Pilgrim's Progress."

<sup>2</sup> *Jerusalem*, 72, 49.



rate, Blake had little understanding of that passivity in which exists the highest form of activity and for that reason, I think, one must hesitate before giving him the style of "mystic."

Another matter on which we must find Blake wanting is in an understanding of humility. This is of all virtues the most difficult to grasp and Blake was surrounded by examples of the Uriah Heep form, which made him react against it altogether.

God wants not Man to humble himself  
This is the trick of the Ancient Elf,

and this distrust of humility lay at the root of Blake's indecision about the existence of an objective Deity. Here, Mr. Blackstone stresses his unorthodoxy, where Mr. Davies, in a recent study,<sup>1</sup> tries to evade it. Mr. Blackstone is right in saying that "Blake's is a Christianity from which the Father is left out. . . . It is not as sons but as brothers, that Blake envisages the human family." Blake felt uneasy about the idea of Fatherhood, something to which one looked up. This apprehension is expressed in the lines:

First God Almighty comes with a Thump on the Head.  
Then Jesus Christ comes with a balm to heal it.

Though a certain amount of this can be explained in Freudian terms, much of it seems to spring from a misunderstanding of obedience, and thus a dislike of conforming to a higher will. As Mr. Blackstone says, *Will* is usually an evil phenomenon in Blake.

As a spiritual teacher Blake is one of the rare examples who follow the "Way of Affirmation of Images" rather than that of "Rejection." Traherne is another. But because Blake showed so fine an appreciation of this path, there is not need for anyone to decry those who have taken the other. (Here Mr. Blackstone's remarks are as irritating as they are uninformed.) In some of his most daring statements, Blake has parallels among Catholic mystics. In his rejection of the Virtues he might have been echoing the author of the *Mirror of Simple Souls*:

Virtues, I say to thee, farewell.

In his insistence on action, too, Blake recognizes the vital importance of the Fires of Charity. Too honest to pay lip-service to the pseudo-Christianity of his day, he was obliged painfully to re-discover truth for himself by a merciless examination of his own soul. We have much to learn from Blake but by no means everything, as Mr. Blackstone comes near to claiming.

D. HIRST

<sup>1</sup> *The Theology of William Blake*, 1948.

## FRENCH STAINED GLASS

*The Stained Glass of French Churches*, with an essay by Louis Grodecki (Lindsay Drummond, London. Les Editions du Chêne, Paris 45s).

THIS is a picture book with a misleading title. A comprehensive survey is implied, but in fact both introduction and plates are confined for the most part to a study of a particular phase in stained glass production. Of the thirty-two colour-plates eight are given to the twelfth-century glass of Saint-Denis, Chartres, Vendôme, Le Mans and Châlons-sur-Marne, twenty-two are given to the thirteenth-century glass of Chartres, Bourges, Sens and the Sainte-Chapelle at Paris. One plate only, a detail from the glass of Saint-Étienne of Mulhouse, exemplifies the diverse schools of the fourteenth century; another plate, showing part of a window from Saint-Séverin of Paris, is the sole representative of fifteenth-century glass. The monochrome illustrations in the text offer interior views of Laon (twelfth and thirteenth century), Chartres, Bourges, Saint-Urbain of Troyes, the Sainte-Chapelle at Paris, and Amiens (thirteenth century). The survey of the book is completed by a smudgy view of the rose window of Notre Dame of Paris and by two illuminations reproduced from the Psalter of Ingeburge and the Psalter of Saint Louis respectively. The limited scope of this book may at once be perceived. The schools which flourished in Normandy in the fourteenth century, including some of the finest glass of the period at the Cathedral of Évreux, and the fifteenth-century regional schools are not represented at all. No attempt has been made to illustrate Renaissance glass or, possibly with more justification, the painted glass of the seventeenth century.

But this picture book is misleading in more than its title. The roto-gravure illustrations give a precise record of church interiors, but unfortunately the effect of those plates in four-colour process is lurid and falsifying. Not infrequently the register is at fault. The blurred result combined with a varnish which presumably is intended to suggest the luminous quality of stained glass succeeds only in producing a disagreeable travesty.

The text has been set out with pretension. There is much play with different kinds of lettering and mediaeval scripts. The printer's fantasy on p. 28, which may serve very well to illustrate the Mouse's tale in *Alice in Wonderland*, seems out of place in connection with Romanesque and Gothic art. There are, all the more regrettably considering the intention of brave effects, several misprints, for example, on p. 7, "radio" should read "ratio," on p. 14 "Sévy-en-Mézières" is more often printed as "Séry-les-Mézières," and p. 26 "Ingerburge" should read "Ingeburge."

Students of medieval glass will probably be acquainted with M. Grodecki's masterly study of the windows of Bourges, Chartres and Poitiers published recently in the *Journal* of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes. From his researches on twelfth and thirteenth century stained glass he has, in the book under review, distilled his scholarship down to a short respectable introductory essay. With clarity and simplicity he has summarized the principles of composition and technique, he has given an analysis of the relationship between the glass and its architectural setting and an historical survey until the end of the thirteenth century. The succeeding centuries are condensed into a few scarcely adequate lines, rather as though M. Grodecki had dismounted in midstream. Throughout the essay, however, the general reader should feel that his understanding of the style of a given period has been enlarged. A useful bibliography completes the work. I have not been able to compare the French edition with the English version, but the translation seems to be an intelligible rendering of the original. In general the book has a flashy luxurious air which does not bear close inspection. M. Grodecki's essay deserves a finer setting.

JOHN BECKWITH

#### PHILO IN FOCUS

*Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.* By Harry Austryn Wolfson. (Harvard University Press. 2 vols. \$10.00 a set.)

*Pythagoreans and Eleatics.* By J. E. Raven. (Cambridge University Press, 12s. 6d.)

**A**LTHOUGH Professor Wolfson's study of Philo is a unified whole, one can distinguish two aspects. There is, first, the analysis, grouping and interpretation of Philo's philosophical ideas. In succeeding chapters the author discusses Philo's doctrines concerning the relation of philosophy to Scripture (an important and interesting theme), the divine Ideas, the Powers and the Logos, creation, the soul and angels, free will, knowledge and prophecy, the existence and nature of God, ethical and political theory. This detailed presentation of Philo's doctrines is thorough and systematic. The Jewish philosopher has often been characterized as an unoriginal and slovenly thinker; but the Philo presented by Professor Wolfson is a systematic thinker who knew very well what he was about. In view of what one knows of other philosophers it is difficult to avoid the impression that the author's Philo is somewhat too good to be true, so adroitly are apparent contradictions reconciled and inconsistencies explained away; but it seems to me that the author has certainly succeeded in showing

that Philo was not a man who simply borrowed ideas far and wide from Greek philosophers and then tried to reconcile them with the Scriptures in an unintelligent and fantastic manner without the employment of any principles of systematization. The peculiar position of Philo in Hellenistic philosophy as a thinker who believed in the priority of a definite divine revelation and in philosophy as ancillary to Scripture is well brought out.

A much-discussed question is the precise status attributed by Philo to the Logos, the Ideas and the Powers. Professor Wolfson tidies up the apparent confusion and finds three distinct stages: the Logos considered as the divine mind, identical with God and containing the ideas of all possible beings; the Logos as a created being or mind, containing the ideas as patterns of creation; and the Logos considered as immanent and operative in creation. But while the author insists that the Logos, in its second stage, is a created being and serves as the pattern of creation, he will not allow that it is an instrument of God in any other sense than that of being a model or pattern. In other words, he rejects the assertion commonly made by historians that the Logos was a necessary instrument in the creative act and that God, being transcendent and immaterial, had to create through an intermediary being. He points out that Philo, believing in creation by intellect and will, that is, in a free creative act, was in no way compelled, as a philosopher like Plotinus was compelled, to introduce the idea of "intermediary beings" in order to explain how God could create a pluralistic world. Philo does seem somewhat doubtful about God's direct creation of all material beings; but Professor Wolfson rightly draws attention to the difference between Philo's idea of creation and that maintained by the Middle and neo-Platonists.

It is also not infrequently stated by historians that for Philo the highest state attainable by the soul is the state of "ecstasy," in the sense of a mystic intuition of the Godhead; and I must admit that I have myself made this statement in my history of Greek philosophy. Professor Wolfson shows, however, that Philo does not use the term "ecstasy" in the sense given it by later mystics. (As a matter of fact, Bréhier makes the same point.) He uses it for the state of prophetic inspiration, but not for a mystic intuition of the divine essence, which is unknowable. The author also argues that when Philo speaks of a clear or immediate or direct vision of God, he is referring simply to a communicated immediate perception of the evidence for God's existence, which renders discursive reasoning unnecessary, and not at all to an immediate perception of the divine essence. If this view is correct, one cannot, of course, look to Philo for the origin of the Plotinian doctrine of ecstasy.

The second aspect of Professor Wolfson's study of Philo is repre-

sented by his attempt to show the importance of Philo and the influence of his principles on mediaeval Christian, Jewish and Islamic thought. For example, he regards Philo as the origin of the view that philosophy is ancillary to theology, the view that was commonly held by European philosophers until Spinoza in the seventeenth century denied revelation and "emancipated" philosophy. Philo and Spinoza are contrasted all along the line. Now, that Philo is a much better representative of "Jewish philosophy" than Spinoza seems to me undeniable, since the former possessed that belief in revelation which is essential to orthodox Judaism and which Spinoza lacked; and I should also agree that the importance of Philo is greater than the place usually accorded him in histories of philosophy would suggest; but I cannot help feeling that to depict Philo as if he were practically the fountain-head of mediaeval philosophy is to be guilty of some exaggeration. Philo certainly influenced early Christian writers like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and the various suggestions put forward by men like Justin Martyr and Clement concerning the character and origin of Greek philosophy were clearly derived originally from Philo; but, though Philo's influence is undeniable, one must remember that the situation in which Christian and Islamic mediaeval philosophic thinkers found themselves was in some degree parallel to that of Philo and that (to take one point) the ancillary notion of philosophy was bound to suggest itself to believers in a divine revelation, whatever Philo may have thought about the matter. Moreover, I think that it is an exaggeration to imply that Philo set the tone, as it were, for philosophy until the villain of the piece, Spinoza, came on the scene. Spinoza was by no means a bolt from the blue; we can see the "emancipation" of philosophy taking shape within the Middle Ages and during the time of the Renaissance. No doubt the author knows this quite well himself; I regret that I have not seen his other writings, and in any case he has yet to treat of the intervening period between Philo and Spinoza; but the reader of the volumes on Philo might easily get the impression that the two chief poles of Western philosophy are Philo and Spinoza; and I think myself that this would be a mistaken impression. This is not, of course, to belittle Professor Wolfson's achievement or the great value of his study of Philo. No student of Hellenistic philosophy or of mediaeval thought should neglect it. If the author tends to exaggerate the importance of Philo, as I am inclined to think he does, this will, one hopes, serve the useful purpose of counteracting the customary minimization of the Jewish thinker.

In the case of Philo we are well provided with original writings: the case is otherwise when we come to the Pythagoreans and the Eleatics, of whom Mr. Raven treats in a lucid and very carefully reasoned work of scholarship, in which he attempts to reconstruct the



historical development of Pythagoreanism in face of criticism from Parmenides and Zeno. The author argues that in early Pythagoreanism there was a fundamental dualism, according to which the One or the principle of unity was identified with the Limit. Under pressure of criticism from Parmenides the Pythagoreans abandoned this identification and made unity or the unit, from which numbers are successively generated, the product of the imposition of Limit upon the Unlimited. Zeno's criticism led to further modification of the Pythagorean system. But the fundamental principles of the system, the original dualism and the simultaneous generation of numbers and of things, remained substantially the same. On the other hand, the Eleatics had to modify their original position under pressure of counter-attacks from the Pythagoreans. For example, Parmenides' doctrine that the One is limited or finite was exposed to the criticism that in this case there must be the unlimited void outside it, while his notion of the One as extended was exposed to the criticism that in this case the One must have parts. Melissus accordingly affirmed the infinity of the One and at the same time denied to it the characteristics of body, though he did not get as far as explicitly asserting its spirituality or positive immateriality since a clear and explicit distinction between the corporeal and incorporeal was not then current. Or, if one prefers, the requisite linguistic expressions were not available.

Mr. Raven believes that "any account of Pythagoreanism that ignores the testimony of Aristotle is a house built upon sand"; but he is careful to test and compare the available evidence concerning the doctrines of the Pythagoreans, and he points out where ancient authors interpret the theories of early philosophers in terms of later developments. It seems to me, so far as I am competent to judge, that his account of early Pythagoreanism and its relations with Eleaticism is the best that has appeared to date: I think that it disposes of Cornford's idea that "in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. two different and radically opposed systems of thought were elaborated within the Pythagorean School." Some of his conclusions are admittedly conjectural; but in the state of the evidence they could not be anything else. Serious students of Greek philosophy will find the book useful and enlightening; but one should perhaps draw attention to the words "serious students"; Greek quotations, for example, are practically always given without translation. Incidentally, Mr. Raven rejects as spurious the fragments attributed to Philolaus. They are, he thinks, "part of a post-Aristotelian forgery that was based largely upon Aristotle's accounts" (of Pythagoreanism). Not everyone will agree; but it cannot be denied that the author makes out a very good case for his view.

FREDERICK C. COPLESTON.





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